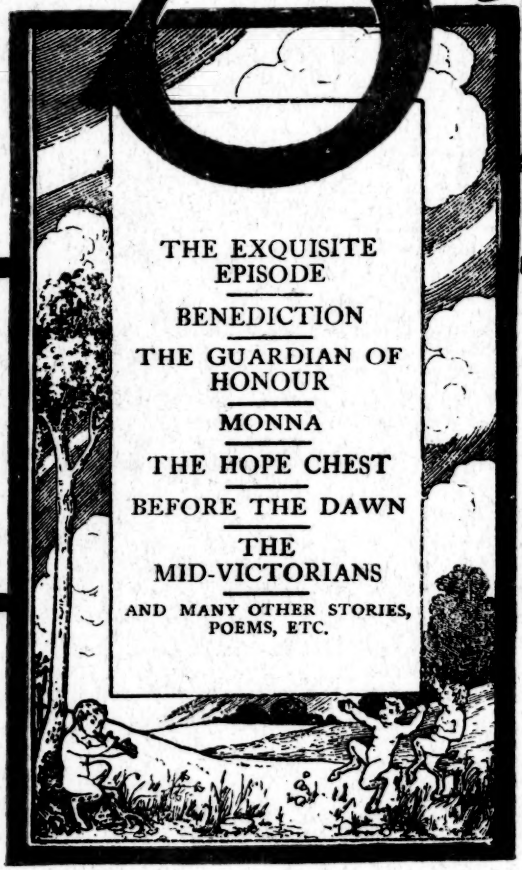
# THE SMART SET

*A Magazine of Cleverness*

*To Amuse, Not to Instruct*



THE EXQUISITE EPISODE

BENEDICTION

THE GUARDIAN OF HONOUR

MONNA

THE HOPE CHEST

BEFORE THE DAWN

THE MID-VICTORIANS

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, ETC.

## FEBRUARY 1920

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

1/3 NET


DAY & NIGHT WEAR (Regd. Trade Mark.)

"Viyella" (Regd. Trade Marks.) "AZA" "Clydella"

WM. HOLLINS & CO., LTD. (Trade only) 24-26 Newgate Street, London, E.C. 1.



S.37



FEBRUARY 1920 THE SMART SET 1/3 N

# THE SMART SET

## A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright in all countries and must not be reprinted

Editor—J. W. MILNE

### FEBRUARY, 1920


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| THE OLDER WOMAN | Mifflin Crane | 105 |
| THE GUARDIAN OF HONOUR | L. M. Hussey | 107 |
| RAISON D'ETRE | T. F. Mitchell | 130 |
| IF I COULD BUT REMEMBER | Glenn Ward Dresbach | 130 |
| BENEDICTION | F. Scott Fitzgerald | 131 |
| SONG OF THE JEALOUS LOVER | Harold Cook | 140 |
| THE MID-VICTORIANS | Edith Chapman | 141 |
| A POEM IN PROSE | Dennison Varr | 146 |
| QUIET DAYS | Muna Lee | 146 |
| THE HOPE CHEST | L. M. Hussey | 147 |
| INTERPRETATION | Luis Muñoz Marin | 155 |
| TRUTH | C. R. Corbin | 156 |
| THE EXQUISITE EPISODE | Helen Woljeska | 157 |
| BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF A MOTION-PICTURE PALACE | Charles Hanson Towne | 160 |
| BEFORE THE DAWN | Wilson Hicks | 161 |
| THE TINKERS' DOG | Francis Carlin | 166 |
| ORIENTALE | Leslie Nelson Jennings | 166 |
| MODERN IMPROVEMENTS | Bertram Bloch | 167 |
| MORNING | Muna Lee | 174 |
| THE SWINE OF CIRCE | Kathryn White Ryan | 175 |
| THE CHEQUE | Joseph Upper | 177 |
| ATTRACTIVENESS | John F. Lord | 182 |
| IF I WERE KING | John McClure | 182 |
| THE LAST LOVE | John C. Cavendish | 183 |
| MONNA | F. P. Delgado | 191 |
| JOY | Jessie B. Rittenhouse | 194 |
| PETIT PIERRE | Henri Allorge | 195 |
| AN INVITATION TO LUNCH | Lawrence Vail | 197 |
| INDIVIDUALISTS | Amanda Benjamin Hall | 200 |
| ABOUT FASHIONS | Various Hands | 202 |
| MOTORS AND MOTORING | W. Whittall | 204 |


Annual Subscription, 15/- post free. Foreign Subscription, 16/- post free.

Published by THE ROLLS HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., Broams Buildings, E.C., for the Proprietor, J. W. Da Costa.

"The Smart Set" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C. 2 to which all editorial and advertising matter should be addressed.

THE INDIAN RESTAURANTS, LIMITED

9, LEICESTER PLACE, LEICESTER SQUARE, W.C. 2

*Telephone: Gerrard 3272* 12, Rupert Street, Coventry Street, W.1

CURRIES TO SUIT THE MOST FASTIDIOUS PALATES.

A TRIAL IS WELCOMED.

## "MR. LLOYD GEORGE & FOCH"

*(Reprinted from "Manchester Guardian.")*

"AFTER the lunch, Dr. Magian, director of the French Hospital at Whitworth Park, of which Mr. Lloyd George is president, was presented to the Prime Minister, who signed the President's Roll, which was illuminated with paintings of the Allied military chiefs.

"'Ah!' said Mr. Lloyd George, pointing to the portrait of Marshal Foch at the head of the parchment. 'Splendid! I would sign anything with Foch on it!'

"Dr. Magian offered his fountain pen. 'No, no,' said Mr. Lloyd George. 'I'm going to sign this with the Peace Pen,' and he did so with the *gold-mounted pen that he had used to sign the Treaty of Peace."

**The Pen referred to was Mr. Lloyd George's own Waterman's Ideal. (Illustration shows replica, in reduced size.)*

**Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen**

Three Types:—"Self-Filling" and "Safety," 15/- and upwards; "Regular," 10/6 and upwards. Nibs to suit all hands.

See also No. 54 "Self-Filling" Type at 20/- with larger Nib. Of Stationers and Jewellers. *Write for List.*

**L. G. Sloan, Ltd., The Pen Corner, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2**

Shorten Shaving-time

*– lather with*

PRICE'S *REGINA* Shaving Stick

PRICE'S, Battersea, London, S.W. 11

*A Permanent Youthful Appearance.*

**Mrs. ADAIR'S**

# EASTERN MUSCLE OIL

TRADE MARK.

*Removes all Lines, Fills out Hollows, Gives and Retains for you a Good, Clear, Healthy and Natural Complexion.*

Nearer to the Natural Oil of the Skin than any yet invented.

*Reaches the Muscles and Tissues, and is a Youth Restorer.*

*Original and Unsolicited Testimonials can be seen.*

**Prices 12/6, 21/6, and 35/6.** Small Sample Size, 5/6. Largest Size sufficient for One Year.

**Adair Ganesh Establishment,** 92, NEW BOND STREET (Oxford St. End.) LONDON, W.

*Telephone*—GERRARD 3782. Also PARIS and NEW YORK

## SHORT MEN & WOMEN

are often ignored and looked down upon. Tall people receive favourable consideration and attention in every walk of life. By my easy, scientific, and safe method **you can grow several inches taller.** Many people have added 1½ to 4 inches to their height by My System. Write at once for FREE particulars, mentioning "SMART SET MAGAZINE." *Address:*

ENQUIRY DEPT., 51 CHURCH ST., SOUTH SHORE, BLACKPOOL

## ASTROLOGY

Before making New Year Resolutions and Plans obtain a special Astrological Study of your life by an expert Astrologer. **BUSINESS; CHANGES; MATRIMONY; FUTURE PROSPECTS.** Send birth date, P.O. **1s.** and stamp, to MR. LEO LYON, 34 (H) MOORFIELDS, LIVERPOOL.

## AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT

for your friend is an **Extended Astrological Study** of his or her life. These Studies are prepared with the utmost care, and are carefully typed, and bound in suitable form. *Write now for particulars.*

## YOUR DESTINY

A scientific investigation into the forces controlling your destiny

INTERESTING REVELATIONS

Send DATE, TIME, and PLACE of BIRTH

Readings at 5s., 10s. 6d., £1 1s., and £2 2s. Birthday Reading, 2s. 6d.

Questions of an IMPORTANT nature, 10s. 6d. each query.

All Orders receive my Personal Attention.

**S. ROBERT RAYE, 97, Brondesbury Villas, Kilburn, London, N.W. 6**

## NEW AUTHORS WANTED

This Year the demand for Articles and Stories will break all records. New Periodicals want new writers.

Send short MS. (with stamp for return) to **Editor-in-Chief, Practical Correspondence College, Ltd., 5, Thanet House, Strand,** for *gratis* criticism, advice, and particulars of Spare-time Home-Study Scholarships.

**When answering these Advertisements please mention the Smart Set**

POPE & BRADLEY
Sole Proprietor H. Dennis Bradley
Civil, Military & Naval Tailors.

# LIGHTER THAN AIR

## By H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

MASTERS AND MISTRESSES

IF we could always permit ourselves never to be serious it would be a beautiful world.

* * * * *

To express laughter is tedious, but when a woman laughs it is an expressive "He! He!"

* * * * *

Is it possible for the mind to become too clever? Perhaps! But then one can always lose it. And only the few deserve the joy of madness.

* * * * *

In a mixed *tête-à-tête* it is a fascinating occupation to separate the chaff from the wit.

* * * * *

A pretty person, who failed to exite in me any physical appeal, was complimentary, and called me a "buffoon." She was right! I did not make love, so, of course, to her, I was a "buffoon."

* * * * *

The emotion of a fat fool is merely a voluptuous vomit.

* * * * *

Politically, I incline to the belief that England is suffering from fatty degeneration of the Art.

* * * * *

They told us the war was a war for freedom. Poor freedom! Freedom must have lost.

* * * * *

I do not tell the truth simply because of the love of it, but my fighting spirit cannot resist the magnificent challenge.

* * * * *

Why value applause? The bawls of the multitude are the mere expression of tragic impotence.

* * * * *

The world is over-populated with dead minds.

It is better to have loved and won, than never to have two and lost.

* * * * *

One has to learn to love a few, or become an anchorite and find oneself. Am I unselfish or ambitious?

* * * * *

The beauty of my virtuous emotion towards some women amazes me, until I analyse the virtue of desire.

* * * * *

Pity the poor provider. I must live joyfully, and be luxuriously lazy. That is why I write subtle advertisements instead of original plays.

* * * * *

I live in a sublime state of unsettled subtlety. (Curse these alliterations, I can't keep away from them. But they breed themselves naturally. I do not manufacture.)

* * * * *

My correspondents are legion. "Your style is so singular," writes one. "I like your square talk," says another. But both are wrong, for I sometimes write in the circular plural.

* * * * *

A woman wears a halo when she cannot wear beautiful clothes.

* * * * *

Some of us are born light, some achieve lightness, and some have ethereal things thrust upon them.

* * * * *

"To argue with you is useless," said an irritated charmer to me one day, "it is like water on a duck's back." She lacked the grace to say it was like champagne on a bird of paradise's tail.

* * * * *

If one leads a devil of a life one must at least have the courtesy to give Satan a warm handshake in the whereafter.

* * * * *

To keep one's mind fresh and clean it is necessary to change it at least as often as one changes one's underclothing.

* * * * *

It is possible that a woman can fool all men some of the time; it is probable she can fool some men all the time; but she would only acknowledge to her intimates that she can fool all men all the time ("Hell!" said the Duke).

* * * * *

Only supermen are strong enough to bear the truth. The sensitive soul of woman does not aspire to Herculean occupation.

* * * * *

I am tired of clothes, and bored with food, but I shall always need shelter, therefore I must casually mention that Pope and Bradley continue to make good clothes at almost altruistic prices. Lounge Suits from £10 10s. Dinner Suits from £14 14s. Overcoats from £10 10s.

TWO ESTABLISHMENTS ONLY
14 OLD BOND STREET, W.
11-13 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C

# SIMPLEX

INVITES the patronage of all who desire to retain pleasant memories of the Derby meetings—or any other meeting in which they may be interested.

There are some who are prejudiced against the idea of receiving advice about racing—but why? If you know a friend in the City—one who is in intimate touch with the right people—do you not simply yearn to ask him to tell you what he knows? Of course you do, and just as the ordinary speculator or investor needs sound advice to guide him in his operations, so does he (or she) who takes a speculative interest in racing.

And why not have it? If you want advice on law, you go to a man of legal experience to get it; if you want advice on your health, you go to an expert for it, so why not seek the advice of an expert at racing? I have owned many winners, and I get to know the business intended by a good many stables, which knowledge, combined with experience and good judgment, and the fact that I spare no outlay and no trouble which will bring WINNERS, necessarily results in profit, both to myself and to those who patronise me.

Now, the first thing to remember is this—It is of no use backing horses every day just for the sake of having a bet. The only sure way to success is to *wait*, to wait until something really reliable comes along, and that is my part of the business, and I observe it strictly. I cannot and *will not* wire every day.

Another thing is, to unalterably confine your operations to *one horse*, and never more under any circumstances whatever. Then, by following these occasional items of genuine information, strictly one horse, you can absolutely rely on beating your bookmaker, and I want you to accept my help, for I know that I can win money for you regularly.

If you are attending any meeting, or if you are staying at home and desire to take a speculative interest in any race-meetings, you cannot do better than patronise me, for I have the best men on the Turf working for me, I employ men who attend every meeting and travel the training quarters, ever on the search for winners, and I am confident that the profit of the season 1919 will surpass even that of past years. I lay no claim to infallibility, but I DO claim experience and judgment, which MUST be beneficial to my followers.

I supply the information each day that I advise anything to be done, my terms being the odds to two sovereigns each winner. Add £2 to your stake every time, and the profit of that £2 (as paid to you by your bookmaker) is what you pay me for each win, as my fee for the advice. Don't run away with the idea that the information is dear, for it is nothing of the sort. It is not what you pay for WINS that counts against you, but what you pay your bookmaker for losers, and you will win oftener than you will lose if you follow me. Moreover, the information will really cost you very little, if you add my fee to your own stake every time, as the only out-of-pocket cost to you is when the information loses, which is not often.

Intending followers must send four stamped and addressed forms (or their cost), with clear instructions for me to follow, and settle promptly for winners as due. No commissions are executed, but I can wire direct to the Agents of those who cannot personally attend to wires.

*FULL PARTICULARS FREE ON APPLICATION.*

**Fill in form below, and send along as directed, so as to start your new income NOW.**

.....

**SIMPLEX ADVICE BUREAU.**

.....192.....

**To SIMPLEX, 1, New Oxford-street, London, W.C.**

Dear Sir,

Please register me as a follower of the above. I agree to return you the odds to Two Pounds on all winners, and I enclose four stamped telegrams (or their cost). I shall remit promptly as soon as I know results. I am of age and do not reside at any School or College.

Signed .....

Remember 4 stamped forms (or cost) for me to wire you.

.....

.....

**If going to races—or staying at home—you want SIMPLEX.**

# Got a Cold

**If so, you are "in the fashion" —but on no account neglect your cold; you never can tell what complications may arise.**

The surest and safest way of getting rid of Colds, Coughs, Influenza, and similar ailments is to take Bitrate of Tar, which relieves all these ailments in marvellously quick time.

Bitrate of Tar contains no harmful drugs or narcotics, is pleasant to the taste, and can be taken with safety at all times by adults and children. You run no risk of loss or disappointment, because every package contains a binding Guarantee of Satisfaction or Money Back.

***Get a bottle to-day; it is the safest, surest and quickest remedy obtainable for Coughs and Colds.***

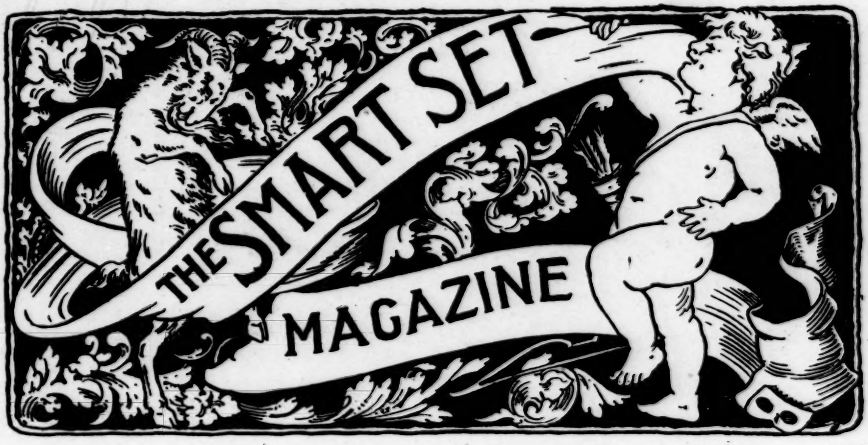
**PRICE 1/3 and 3/- Per Bottle**

# Bitrate of Tar

**FOR QUICK RELIEF OF**

## Coughs, Colds, Influenza, Bronchitis, Etc.

Vol. LX FEBRUARY, 1920 No. 2




UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
FE 12
12-20
CAMBRIDGE

# THE OLDER WOMAN

By Mifflin Crane

SHE went to the telephone and recognized the voice of little Marie.

"Are you busy, Mrs. Moffat?" the girl asked. "But let me come up for a second anyway! I've got such *exciting* news to tell you!"

The older woman frowned a little; her shoulders sagged in a melancholy droop. She was in a mood of despondency, disinclined to speak to anybody. But Marie was a touching young thing, showing her a charming, inexplicable affection. She hesitated only a second before she answered.

"Of course, dear," she said. "Come right up. I'm alone this evening."

She returned the instrument to its hook, took a step toward the chair abandoned at the summons of the telephone, and then, changing her mind, waited near the door. A moment later she heard the metallic click of the elevator, rapid steps in the outer corridor, and Marie was at the door.

They embraced; the young girl kissed her warmly. In that initial instance the older woman saw that some emotional thing had happened. The girl's eyes were wide and bright, the pupils dilated, as if with fever. Her cheeks were coloured with a fluctuant flush. Her breath seemed to tremble with each expiring impulse, as if in ecstatic vibration with her tremulously secret thoughts. Mrs. Moffat took her hands; she drew her gently toward the divan.

"Tell me about it, dear?" she said.

Before she spoke the young girl kissed the older woman with grateful affection.

"It happened just as you said it would," she began. "This afternoon he came. I pretended that I didn't want to talk to him, I pretended to be bored. He tried to kiss me—I turned away from him. Then he told me that he wanted me—that I was the only girl in the world for him! . . ."

Her excited little voice continued; the older woman was scarcely listening now. But the same smile curved her lips, fixed mechanically.

A cheap little ruse had sufficed for Marie's success. An old trick—leading the young fellow to believe that she

was indifferent. Two weeks ago the child had come to her in despair—and received the counsel that had served her so fortunately. Mrs. Moffat suppressed a sigh.

*She* knew these intriguing dodges, these matters of cleverness and technique. Two decades of experience had taught her them—and now they were useless. A sense of self-contempt came into her thoughts like the sudden taste of a bitter drug. She had become one who knew all the rules to teach, but was herself powerless to accomplish.

Now she raised her eyes and her glance passed over the eager girl who spoke to her. Marie was lovely. Her brown hair crowned her with tender curves; the pink tips of her ears were like little jewels, half concealed. Her mouth was gracious with expectant smiles; her eyes were lighted with eagerness. To the older woman each detail of her charm was a reproach, reminding her of her own passed loveliness.

The smile on her lips grew harsher; her eyes narrowed with a cold emotion. A feeling scarcely separable from hate assailed her senses as the girl's persistent youth was imaged in her eyes. For a moment it seemed that she was being plagued, by a sardonic enemy in the fates, with this vision of perfection, so that she might comprehend more entirely the bitterness of her personal loss.

And then, as if her gaze had at last penetrated some falsifying film, she saw the little, almost premonitory lines about her young friend's eyes; tiny, half defined wrinkles, now no more than suggested shadows: time would make these deep! She observed the wraith of a pallor that rested on the girl's full lips: already their fading was announced. All the small defects, the brief, immaterial touches of time were recorded then in her keen scrutiny.

It was at this moment that Mrs. Moffat experienced her prophetic vision. In a single instant of time a dozen years passed over the young face before her; the lips had hardened, the eyes were marked by fan-like radiations, their eager light had faded into the dull glow of disillusion, the smooth cheeks had lost the supple flow of their curves, the voice its charm of uttering dreaming words.

The older woman smiled sincerely, now, a smile of sincere pleasure. The oppressive consciousness of her own defeat was assuaged by the knowledge of this other woman's unescapable fate. An emotion of almost passionate delight stirred her. None could escape! Marie must sooner or later grow old too, and in the transition suffer as she suffered.

She put out her hand; she touched the young girl's arm.

"And you're going to be very happy?" she asked.

The girl smiled, assured, confident, dreaming. She made no reply; the assurance of her expectant eyes was an adequate answer.

And witnessing this pathetic confidence, the older woman's emotions softened. She no longer knew the thrill of a personal vindication, an intimate pleasure, in her secret knowledge of those unhappy circumstances life would bring to her young friend. Instead, her heart was touched with pity, with a feeling of oneness, of vague solidarity, of scarcely defined sympathy, with a feeling that she and this young girl shared a communion of fate.

Time was their mutual assailant; they were comrades-in-arms in the same ineffectual and ever-lost battle.

The knowledge that she was not alone tempered her secret melancholy; she stood up, and circling little Marie with her arms, she kissed her warm cheek tenderly.

The young girl said nothing. She scarcely felt the embrace. She sat as before, silently, in dreams.

# THE GUARDIAN OF HONOUR

By L. M. Hussey

## CHAPTER I

GENERAL GONZALES, usually the dominant one, was now balked by his wife's rat-like ferocity. She was in a corner with an animal's determination to fight. In her taut hands she grasped a heavy vase, held it uplifted over his head, and even though he no longer advanced, nor threatened her further, he was apprehensive lest she hurl it anyhow.

He knew it was useless to attempt her proposed chastisement at this moment. His own fury had not been quick enough—and she was so much like a cat, so agile, so swift to elude his clutch. He stood in front of her, therefore, without movement, and a laborious sneer lifted his moustache and revealed his contemptuous lips.

"*Señora*," he said, "you look very natural. You should be caged in a zoo with the other animals. But—" (he glared at her with a sudden ferocity that made her clutch the vase in a firmer grip) "—if I find you carrying my name about among dogs of that sort again, you'll live to regret it; you'll surely regret it!"

He stepped back a little until he felt sure that he was out of range and then, turning, walked out into the corridor.

Through the door he could see his daughter Virginia fondling her tame parrot in the court. His son Ismael was lying under a palm tree, reading a paper-backed book.

He passed out and approached Virginia. The girl, still holding the parrot perched on one of her slender fingers, raised her jet eyes to his with an understanding and even sympathetic glance. Her calm aspect brought some subsidence of his heated temper; she was a pleasant one to look at.

"Your admirable mother was about to break a vase over my head," he muttered.

The girl sighed.

"She makes it very hard for all of us," she said. "She is irresponsible, a completely irresponsible person. What notion has she of our name, father—of your position?"

"None!" he exclaimed with a low-voiced bitterness. "I've been damned ever since the day I married her. Now I discover that she's been carrying on all sorts of coquetries with Ricardo, the chauffeur. . . .

"And you've discharged Ricardo?"

"What! Ricardo? Of course not! Was that unfortunate man at fault? He is without doubt the best chauffeur in this city. No, I shall not sacrifice Ricardo to your mother. But when I remonstrate with her, she threatens my life with a vase. She's a woman of low impulses!"

He ceased speaking and for a time gazed down morosely at the brilliant parrot that twisted about on his daughter's hand. The bird annoyed him; it seemed to mock him a little, to gesticulate gibingly at his humiliations.

Without speaking again he turned away and crossed the court, entering the hall that terminated in the street door.

His car was standing outside and he stepped into it hurriedly, as one who escapes from a place of abominable enactments. In a moment he was speed-

ing eastward, with no especial goal, but with a full sense of relief.

It was rather late in the afternoon and he saw some of his friends driving past in the opposite direction, on the way to their cafés. To-day he shrank from their company and from the customary pleasant hours of conversation and drinking. He had seldom been more depressed, nor his sense of failure more acute.

This was the fashionable section of the avenue. He knew each house and the families within. He thought of the wives of these men—mostly, like himself, officials of some sort in the government. Naturally, they were not all happy; no doubt very few cared anything for their women. But they kept up a certain discreet outward respectability, an appearance of amity, an avoidance of anything openly disgraceful or vulgar.

He knew their women; each one of them had some sense of her husband's honour. To go into one of these houses was to encounter inevitably the external aspect of correctness—which was all that could be asked. General Gonzales sighed. No man could demand perfection.

But his own wife was a creature of impossible indiscretions. She made no distinctions between people, none of the simple, palpable distinctions. To her, a half-breed from his plantation was as important as the Gobernador; she'd as lief talk to the one as the other.

This appalling realization, repeating itself to-day with a special emphasis, deepened the lines between his eyes into a frown of the most severe immobility. He felt almost weak, almost defeated. Without these special humiliations of his home, there was enough to trouble him—the difficulty of his position, the envious intrigues against him, all the insecurity of political life in his city.

He found he was reaching the outskirts of the town, but still he had no inclination to turn back. Ahead of him he saw the little Petari station on the electric railroad. Turning down here into the disreputable end of *El Paraiso*, he crossed the iron bridge and brought his runabout to a stop. Here he sat down without moving, staring out in front of him.

Vague, morose thoughts passed through his mind like damp fogs of unlifting discontent. The loungers on the bridge watched him in curiosity; he was palpably not one of this region. But no one was surprised. In this quarter there were houses that men of his sort were known to visit in their more trivial moments.

For a time he saw nothing. Little by little, however, his mood relaxed, passing into the one of dull resentment that usually followed upon his more acute rebellions against these domestic indignities. He turned his head and looked about him.

Down the unlovely street he saw one of those familiar blocks of houses that constitute the homes of the poorer people. They were wholly without any grace, box-like structures with staring cement walls, joined into a long rectangle, which was pierced by the door of each separate house like the inadequate openings of a row of beehives.

On the steps, before one of these doors, a young girl was seated—and now he observed that she was persistently looking at him.

## CHAPTER II

At first he thought she was one of the town's women, a natural conclusion in this quarter of the city. But he finally decided against the supposition. She was too shy, and when she discovered that he had observed her, she dropped her eyes, turned her head, and pretended to interest herself in the loungers on the iron bridge.

He could see that she was somewhat nervous, for even at this distance the intermittent tapping of her foot on the pavement was visible.

Now he was interested. The girl offered some release from his thoughts, a welcome diversion. The engine of his car was still running, and slipping in the clutch, he moved down the street, twenty or thirty yards, until he was quite near her.

She must have heard his approach, but for a few moments she gave no sign. Then, lifting her eyes to him again, she gave him a swift, sudden smile that was hidden in an instant by the rapid lowering of her face.

It was an agreeable invitation, but still he hesitated before responding to it. He was again doubtful about her status; perhaps, after all, she was only one of those women of his first surmise. Just now he had no inclination for their commonplace enchantments.

His eyes passed searchingly over her figure, observing her jetty hair that seemed to imprison the day's last sunlight in its ample coils, downward to the nearly concealed curves of her small face, her hands, her little shawl-covered shoulders, to the tip of one worn shoe that still tapped nervously on the pavement. At any rate, she was a novelty, she was different. This determined him; he stepped out of the car, and crossing the pavement, stood in front of her.

"Good afternoon, little *señorita*," he said. "Maybe you're lonely as I am and will talk to me a little."

Now she raised her face and the smile reappeared, vanishing at once and leaving her features surprisingly serious. He saw that her lips trembled a trifle when she spoke.

"Thank you, *señor*," she said. "Yes, I saw you; I'll talk to you. But come inside!"

She stood up, gathering the shawl over her slender hips with her bare arms.

Gonzales was somewhat surprised at the abruptness of her invitation.

He glanced over her shoulder, trying to pierce the dusk of the opened door with his puzzled gaze. He could see no one inside, and his mood was such that he abandoned his customary caution and followed the girl into the house.

He found himself in one of those ordinary damp rooms, dark, disorderly. For an instant he believed himself alone with the girl, but as his eyes adjusted themselves to the inadequate light, he perceived an old woman rising up out of a gaudily painted chair and making obsequious gestures. He bowed slightly; the old woman uttered an insane cackle.

"Good day! Good day; fine *señor*, good day!" she repeated. "Yes, come in, *señor*, don't be afraid of us. You've come to see my little Gloria—yes, that's right! I told her to watch for you, *señor!*"

Again she laughed, and the harsh sound was unpleasant, even sinister, as it resonated from the close walls of the dim room. Now she tottered nearer, and her glassy eyes, passing over the countenance of the visitor, fixed themselves upon the face of the girl.

She spoke again, this time with a feeble, high-pitched ferocity.

"Yes," she said, "this is my girl Gloria. I told her to watch for you. She'll be good to you! I'll see that she's good to you!"

Her words implied a surprising threat; she glared at the girl steadily. Her savagery, because of its astonishing impotence, was the more impressive. Now she was bowing again to Gonzales, and repeating her grotesque gesture many times, she retreated to a little door at the back, and disappeared.

During this prelude the girl remained near one of the gaudy yellow chairs, resting one hand on its back, and uttering no word. The poise of her head, of her shoulders, the attitude of her entire figure, was one of admixed fear and contempt. As the old woman stumbled into the next room, her shoulders drooped a little; she turned, and without meeting his eyes, faced the visitor.

Although not wholly enlightened, he was beginning to understand.

If his surmise were correct, this was not an uncommon situation in his city: an old woman, an old man, some dominant one, exploiting a youthful victim.

He looked curiously at the slight figure before him.

She was so hesitant—he could see her trembling—surely she had not gone far!

"Let us sit down," he said. "I want to talk to you."

She obeyed mutely and he drew up another of the abominable chairs and faced her.

"Who is that?" he asked.

He inclined his head toward the door, the gesture indicating the vanished hag.

"My grandmother," she replied.

Her voice was almost lifeless, and she spoke the words like a phrase from a repeated catechism.

General Gonzales smiled, but it was a slight one, and his heavy moustaches concealed his curved lips. He drew his chair a little closer and lowered his voice.

"You're lying to me," he said.

For the first seconds following his accusation there was no change in her attitude. She sat as before, drooping, her head bent down, her eyes fastened on the littered floor. Then, raising her face, she met his gaze with suddenly widened eyes in which fear and surprise blended together with a startling swiftness.

Her face seemed to lose all its colour, as if, in this stranger before her, she had come to confront a grave crisis in her obscure fortunes. Several times she touched her lips with the tip of her tongue, but no words followed.

Gonzales was still silent; at last she spoke.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"That doesn't matter," he replied.

Again she hesitated.

Then, leaning toward him a little, holding tightly to the arms of her chair, she spoke rapidly, almost in a whisper, and glancing again and again at the door in back, as if she feared the impotent old woman might issue out suddenly to strike the betraying words from her lips.

"Well, then, *señor*," she whispered, "I did lie. At least I think so. She tells me I'm her grandchild, but I don't know what the truth is. This last year she's beat me every day . . . until I'd consent. . . . Well, I did consent finally—what could I do, *señor?* You see, I did consent! Aren't you here? . . ."

With these concluding words her expression changed, and losing their configuration of indefinable terror, her features seemed to reflect another emotion, her reaction to the man seated near her. Her lips became firmer, and curling a trifle, suggested a measure of contempt. Certainly, she gave him no welcome, however complacent she might be.

This surprised him—and interested him. To a degree, she was indubitably unusual, since—despite her outward agreement to the urgings of the old woman—she preserved within herself a fundamental and unbending spirit.

He came to a sudden resolution.

"Of course, she expects you to make as much money as you can," he said.

The girl said nothing.

"Well, then," said Gonzales, "give her this."

He dropped several gold coins in her lap, and before she had the opportunity to say anything in return, to make a suggestion, to reject his gift, or, more likely, to accept it and its implications under her sullen necessity, he arose from his chair and took a step toward the door.

"And that is all, *señorita*," he said.

But she understood more swiftly than he had expected, and before he could reach the door she was at his side, her small, tense hand clutching his arm.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "What do you intend, *señor?*"

Gonzales told her not to question him, told her he had no idea what he meant. It was an impulse—she had to give the old woman some money, wasn't that true? Very well, here was

the money, more than the old hag could reasonably expect; it ought to quiet her for a time. Meanwhile, he wanted nothing himself, and he would probably never see her again.

The girl, still clinging to his arm, searched his face with dark eyes of wide astonishment. He did not meet her gaze, being uncertain with what expression he should look at her. He was beginning to feel uncomfortable and to regret his impulsive act, since it was unrational. Yes, entirely without rationality, since the money could do the girl no good, except temporarily; it could not possibly save her. Moreover, since he was an unsentimental man, accepting all the various aspects of life, he knew he had no wish to save her.

Meanwhile the girl, feature by feature, examined him, as if his were a fabulous presence. Her mouth was opened a little and her quick breath arose and passed in a faint warmth across his face.

"Don't say you won't see me again!" she said at last. "You must let me meet you. I don't understand you! I want to talk to you."

He tried to disengage his arm without consenting, but her fingers tightened, gripping his coat.

"Well, then," he said, "if you want to see me we can meet."

"Where?" she asked.

He told her he would come to-morrow, but not at this house. She was to wait for him above, at the *Puento de Hierro;* there she would find him.

With this assurance she released his arm and he passed out of the house, glad of his freedom. But in a way he did not regret the appointment, for she was not without interest, and he needed interests—thoughts of other things—his customary musings too often turned to his wife. Against her he now uttered several subdued oaths.

"*Nombre de Hijo!*" he exclaimed. "She has been my doom!"

He climbed into his car and turned back toward the *Calle Real de Candelaria.*

## CHAPTER III

His daughter was having some sort of a party that evening, and when he reached home there was a disagreeable bustle in the house; the servants were moving palms into the drawing-room and Virginia, like a field marshal, was directing them with strident abuse.

His saturnine mood had returned and he had no inclination to trouble himself with these activities. So he left the house almost immediately, driving over to the *Plaza Bolivar,* where he went into a little café next to the Yellow House. Here he joined a political group, among them Dr. Fernandez, that inextinguishable Nestor of the country's shifting politics.

General Gonzales was glad of this encounter. The old man was always friendly, and more than once had rescued him from difficult positions. Since Gonzales had become the Minister of War their relations had been closer.

The two went to a table together. For a time the venerable intriguer spoke only of generalities.

"*Señor General,*" he said, "we are all too quiet now. We need changes, a new aspect, ah? After all, it's true, isn't it, that no permanency is satisfying, not to any man? We must pass from purpose to purpose, from thing to thing. What are goals? Illusions, wouldn't you say? Any end is good enough, the zest is all in transition!"

They filled their glasses with a fresh charge of brandy and soda. Old Fernandez leaned across the table, became more confidential, and his rasping voice passed into a disharmonious whisper.

"At your right," he said, "is General Figueredo Paniagua, with his satellites. You haven't observed him, *señor*—you must!"

Gonzales turned in his chair and met the glance of Figueredo Paniagua. They nodded, and the other General, Gonzales' subordinate, turned again to his friends, resuming his interrupted

conversation. But for a moment Gonzales continued to examine his profile, exhibiting, meanwhile, a slight but significant frown.

Figueredo Paniagua was ambitious—he understood this. They had both been candidates for the ministry; Gonzales guessed accurately that the other had always received defeat with small grace. But when all was summed up, Paniagua's influence with the army was much inferior to his own. Therefore, whilst he retained his strength and alertness, there was nothing to fear from the man playing the lesser rôle.

Gonzales turned to his old friend.

"Thank you, *señor*," he said.

"He called on the President three afternoons last week," continued Fernandez, in the same uniquely harsh whisper.

"Yes, I must watch him," agreed the General. "But, between us, what advantage can Gomez gain by doing anything for him? Who is the greater *caudillo*—myself or our estimable other General? Gomez has no reason to jeopardize his security!"

Gonzales' eyes narrowed as he said this, and the jetty eyebrows, descending, gave him a sinister aspect.

Dr. Fernandez shrugged his shoulders.

"Life is very obscene," he said. "Be watchful."

The conversation grew general once more. They drank the customary number of brandies and sodas and then, shaking hands, left for their homes.

It was late now; in the plaza a small, enthusiastic crowd had collected at the prospect of a fight. Ignoring this, Gonzales drove around to the *Candelaria* and eastward to his house.

He arrived as Virginia's guests were leaving, and was annoyed by the necessity of halting a few minutes to speak with a group of them. At last he made his escape, hurried to his room, and, lighting a cigar, paced the chamber with an angry stride.

He was tired, he was vaguely oppressed. His domestic irritations no longer troubled him, but rather the more important necessities of his life. Somehow his strength seemed less to-night, and with this consciousness of frailty came a diminution of his assurance.

He had a clear idea of his position, of its demands. He did not underrate the forces that opposed him, nor was he blind to the unescapable intriguing that accompanied any political advantage in his country. One must be firm, be unyielding, watchful, for ever alert. To-night this necessity wearied him, and he longed for some escape.

In this mood he thought of the little unlucky girl over near the *Puento de Hierro*. He recalled his appointment with her for the following day, and the thought of it served to ease him. After all, she might divert him and so afford some moments of forgetfulness.

Much calmer at last, he undressed and went to bed. When he awoke it was morning and Virginia's parrot was whistling stridently in the garden.

## CHAPTER IV

With several appointments to keep before noon, he dressed hurriedly. After a conference with the Gobernador, he had an agreeable interview with Gomez, the President, and returned home to luncheon in excellent spirits. His wife was nowhere about, and, since her absence freed him of the customary irritations, he departed to keep the afternoon's rendezvous enlivened with a jaunty smile.

Turning into *El Paraiso*, he saw the usual loungers on the bridge, the dubious figures of swarthy, furtive men, ready for unmentionable enterprises. Above these groups, in the direction of the suburban station, was a slight figure set off by a black *mantilla;* this was the girl.

He drove close to the curb; she recognized him and walked rapidly to the side of his car. He gave her a gesture to step in and, obeying, she seated herself at his side.

The girl was silent, her eyes were lowered, her face bent, and, glancing toward her, only the tip of her nose in profile was visible outside the veiling, jetty lace. She seemed inscrutable then, she had an air of mystery, and his interest was enhanced.

He drove north, toward the *Avila*, where, on the outskirts of the town, he had several blocks of houses whose usufruct was enjoyed by some of his lesser retainers. Before one of these, a cement structure somewhat better than the one in which his companion lived, he stopped the car. He helped her to alight; they crossed the pavement and entered.

It was dark inside; Gonzales went to the windows and raised the shades.

"Sit down, little *señorita*," he said.

The girl did not at once obey. Dropping her shawl to her shoulders, she glanced about her with a mingled expression of curiosity and apprehension in her eyes.

Then she looked toward Gonzales, and, meeting his gaze, averted her head at once.

He could see that she was trembling a little; the fringe of the black mantilla vibrated, although no air was stirring in the room. In her face he discovered none of yesterday's sullenness, nor even aloofness, but a new quality, a hesitancy, a curious diffidence. Again she seemed mysterious.

Suddenly she raised her face and met his gaze.

"I know who you are!" she said.

Her voice was low, and she spoke these words gravely.

Her unexpected declaration, with its air of mysterious pronouncement, startled the General a little. He turned his face suddenly and glanced swiftly about the room. But they were, as he had supposed, entirely alone.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"*She* told me who you were," the girl replied.

Her reference to the old woman was not in a name, but only by means of this stressed pronoun. Nevertheless, in uttering it, she made of the word an odious thing; she visibly shrank a little. Gonzales understood, and his vague suspicions were arrested.

He smiled, half sardonically.

"Yes, I suppose *she* would know," he said. "That's her business. Did she compliment you on the catch?"

The girl, taking a step sideways, dropped into a chair, settling herself with a faint sigh. She ignored the General's flippancy and answered him with such a grave simplicity that he felt a touch of shame.

"No, she was going to beat me. You went so quickly she believed I'd lost you, but I showed her the money and then she let me alone. Then she told me who you were. It made me afraid!"

He pulled up one of the chairs and sat down opposite her.

"What is your name?" he asked. "Gloria? Well, little one, I am General Gonzales, and I suppose that does make you afraid of me, eh?"

He met her eyes with an expression half smiling and half bitter.

"This life is very ironic," he said. "There is no need for you to be afraid; that doesn't help me any. But there are others whose fear I'd pay a great deal for."

Of course, she did not comprehend his allusion, but she made no questions. Her eyes were downcast and her little hands fumbled with a bit of her dress, folding and unfolding the thin fabric with a slow nervousness.

When she spoke again her voice was very low and she did not meet his eyes.

"I don't know what you intend to do with me," she said. "I hope it will be lucky that I met you, *señor General*. Certainly you are strong enough to do anything you please with me. But it won't be anything worse than the old *señora!*"

Her admission of his power was flattering. He found now that he was distinctly pleased; he liked the little unfortunate. He was not a man whose compassion was readily touched, and so her

appeal was not the easy one of sentimental pity, but shaped itself from certain subtleties—her obvious respect, her impression of his dignity and station, and, to a degree, her naïve honesty.

He leaned forward a little and gathered up her hands, which yielded to his own without resistance.

"You must leave the old woman," he said. "And, perhaps, it will not be unlucky that we met each other, even for you, little *señorita*. We will see. Meanwhile, would you like to stay here? There are an old man named Pedro and his wife whom you'll come to know; they live in the next house. They will tend the place for you and do whatever you say. And I'll see your old one and make it agreeable for her to forget you, for a time, anyway."

She lifted her face to his eyes.

The black mantilla had fallen from her shoulders; it lay draped over the arms of the chair and the lace ends trailed on the floor. Her face was still grave, and for an instant her great eyes, whose jet pupils seemed miraculously enlarged in the dim light, studied his face as if in a test of his sincerity. The General found her very charming then, touching in her youth, in her helplessness and in her obscurely divined courage.

"I know now it will be a lucky thing for me," she said. "You make me very proud, *señor General*. It is strange that you should want me. . . ."

Then she smiled, her eyes widened, and all her aspect was enlivened. A swift vitality seemed to suffuse itself through her body, passing, in part, to the tired man who watched her. Her hands, still lying in his own, became tense, and the fingers, pressing his, moved in little caresses on his wrists.

"I am very lucky; I am very proud," she said. "I will be sweet to you, and I'll make you forget all the hard things that come into your life."

Her words, and the touch of her slim fingers, brought a desiderate ease into the General's spirits. He felt glad himself; it was a good thing to have found this little one. She was eager to give him a certain needed homage, and a forgetfulness of his anxieties and failures.

But for an instant a peculiar bitterness crept into these appeasing thoughts. In this second he was fully conscious of his life's ironic thrusts—why had she come so late? Her part could only be a little one now; another had usurped her. His eyes were scrutinizing her smiling face, the appealing frailty of her rounded throat, her sloping, dusk shoulders, her slender arms, her small body.

He believed fully that she exemplified a rare sincerity. And he thought of the woman at home, the one to whom he had given his name, and who often availed herself of opportunity to trifle with his honour. It was a contrast that embittered the instant.

But her pleasant nearness brought him a return of his former softened mood. He leaned back in his chair, fixing his eyes sometimes upon her attentive face, again looking past her, almost forgetting her as a visible embodiment, but always feeling her significance—and he began to talk of himself.

As she faded in his mind to no more than a symbol of sympathy, he spoke of increasingly intimate things. It was pleasant to talk about himself, to express some of his anxieties, to even adopt, without any fear of ridicule, a certain rôle of martyrdom.

She learned about his wife, and nodded with understanding. He told her something of his political difficulties, the precariousness of being a great man. This made her eyes shine and she admired his courage.

"Sometimes I am tired," he said. "There's always an ambitious one with a knife at one's back!"

As her ears recorded them, such words as these thrilled her. Vague, romantic heroisms presented themselves to her mind, and, in a vicarious way, hearing of them authentically from the lips of her companion, she shared in their attendant emotions. She was vibrating with an unused happiness. Life, she believed, had suddenly been gra-

cious to her, taking her from days of drab discomfort and from the recent swift approach of an appalling prospect —to the threshold of an incalculable glamour. In her simplicity she acknowledged a deep measure of good fortune.

Her easy emotions expanded like an opening blossom. All her apathy, her fear and her distrust had passed, dissolving in these confidences that came to her ears. She saw the man in front of her as the victim of undeserved indignities—and even of profound perils. Her naïve imagination enlarged the actual uncertainty of his position; before her understanding of this she felt curiously weak, strangely impotent.

Yet she wanted to help him; she wanted to be his protector.

Gonzales paused at last, and, turning in his little chair, glanced out through the square of the small window. The light outdoors had acquired that transient clarity of the swift tropical twilight. He was astonished to find that the afternoon had gone, and regretful.

Looking at the girl now, he found that her figure had grown dim and faintly mysterious. Her little face made a white, ethereal blur against the background of the dark wall behind her.

He arose, and at his rising she stood up also.

"Must you go?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Yes, but I've been very content, little *señorita!*"

She came closer to him, she raised her hands and rested them, after a second's hesitation, on his shoulders.

"Call me Glorina!" she said.

Her slim arms curved about his neck.

"You won't leave me long?" she asked.

"No," he assured her. "To-morrow afternoon I'll come here again. Before I go I'll step in and arrange everything with old Pedro—he'll give you whatever you ask. To-morrow morning, before I come, there are many things you must buy yourself. Pedro will come to my house and get money from me to-night."

She ignored his material arrangements, making no comment. Her arms circled him more tightly; she drew down his face and kissed him.

He was surprised at the fresh charm of her young lips. He left her with regret and anticipation.

## CHAPTER V

But the next day he went to her almost mechanically, as one who keeps, without interest, the form of a necessary habit. A certain incident of the preceding night had brought him disturbing thoughts and concerns, and with this there was commingled the disagreeable memory of the morning's encounter with his wife.

When he left her that first afternoon he was at ease, full of agreeable thoughts, and certainly without any inclination to go home. Therefore, he drove over to *La Francia*, that favourite, friendly place near the Yellow House. Upon entering the café he found a small group of acquaintances standing near the door, all clustered around Hector Calcaño, that amusing old wit of the city.

The General joined them; Calcaño was telling a presumably authentic story about his son's encounter with a policeman. The point of the tale was that Calcaño, as secretary to the Foreign Minister, issued most of the passports to those desirous of leaving the country.

"That damned son of mine," he said, "got drunk last night and came up the street about two o'clock singing an ill-advised song. He's had two or three run-ins with that fellow before, and so the officer thought he could handle him now and give him something of a scare. He was mistaken. My boy tripped him up, sat on him for a while and then, snatching off his helmet, ran up the street.

"The officer came running after him, but the boy made the door just in time and a second before he slammed it shut he threw the helmet in the fellow's face and yelled: 'Now you go to the devil!'

"The ass was so angry that he began

pounding on the door. That woke me up; I raised the window, looked out and saw him there, pulling on the doorknob as if he was crazy.

"'What do you want?' I called.

"'Where's your son, *señor?*'" he asked.

"'I don't know,' I said. 'In bed, I suppose.'

"'Well, I want him!'

"'What for?'

"'*Señor*, he just told me to go to the devil!'

"I stared at the idiot a moment and then, smiling, I answered him very politely:

"'Well, I don't see why you come around and wake me up at this time in the night. I've no objection to you going to the devil, but I certainly can't make you out a passport now!'"

Laughing, several in the group suggested that they all find a suitable table; it was acted upon, and in a moment they were seated and drinks were served. To Gonzales, already in an agreeable mood, it promised to be a pleasant evening.

They had been seated, talking and drinking, for perhaps an hour, when General Figueredo Paniagua, with two or three friends, entered the café. One of his friends preceded him; someone waved from Gonzales' table, and the newcomers walked toward them.

A few feet away Figueredo Paniagua noticed the presence of General Gonzales. The latter waited for him to nod, but, astonishingly, Paniagua stopped abruptly, stared at his superior, frowned and, turning brusquely with no sign of recognition, walked to another table. His friends hesitated a moment and then followed him.

The episode escaped no one; everybody looked at Gonzales. He sat as before, but his face revealed an expression of astonishment that still dominated the assertion of his customary aplomb. His thoughts were confused; he did not understand. It was incredible to the point of unreality that Figueredo Paniagua should offer him this undreamed-of and astounding affront.

Yet, in an instant more, he understood that it was deeply significant—his rival must have received, only recently, the scornful strength of some secret assurance. Otherwise his daring was unaccountable.

But Gonzales was too confused now to take any action on the moment, which was perhaps fortunate for him. He had learned the habit of caution, and this had accounted, in later years, for more than one of his successes. He turned to his friends, seemed to ignore the incident, and smiled. He began to speak of an utterly different thing, and so it was necessary for them to put aside their curiosity.

Still, this was a strained situation. Everybody felt that somewhere the tension must snap, and probably they looked to Gonzales to break it.

In his friends' faces there was an ineffaceable expression of expectancy, mixed with looks of waiting delight; they believed some excitement might follow.

Perhaps their anticipations would have been realized, but Figueredo Paniagua left the café before General Gonzales puzzled out any line of action. He passed by the other's table with a rapid stride, his satellites at his heels.

Gonzales turned his head and stared after him; he gripped the arms of his chair and seemed about to rise, but with the disappearance of his enemy his muscles relaxed, and he rather slouched in his chair, frowning heavily.

He was angry, puzzled and alarmed. In a measure his emotions were those of one whose particular skill begins to fail, whose grip becomes confused, whose knowledge of necessary facts is blurred. He was troubled with premonitions, with vaguely understood portents.

The difficulty and uncertainty of his position, the knowledge of plots and scheming loomed up in his thoughts as something grown suddenly monstrous, no longer answerable to his cunning. He even felt old, and for several mad seconds wondered whether there was no escape from the foreboding future,

where a complete renunciation of his customary life might save him. Yet there remained something too unyielding in him for that.

He did not stay long and he went home to spend a bad night. Many times in his dark room, silent save for the unmarked hum of clumsy, nocturnal insects, he tried to review his position clearly, and to perceive, in definite terms, what sudden new weakness could have come about to shake his assurance. He was unable to fix on anything, yet the conviction of insecurity persisted. The very fact that he could not grapple with the precise character of his alarm maddened him.

In the morning he arose earlier than usual and, although without appetite, walked into the dining-room by habit. Here he discovered his wife, joking with one of the maids, a little mulatto girl.

In his nervous condition the appearance and position of the woman outraged him profoundly. Her body was covered with a slovenly negligée, she wore a dingy sort of a cap on her head that flapped about like a pair of monstrous ears. In comparison, the little maid was neat—upon the entrance of the General she retired with hasty discretion.

Gonzales stood just inside the door, staring at his wife. He resented, as a personal affront, as a deliberate thrust at his position and dignity, this obscene familiarity with the servants. This morning, because of his feeling of insecurity, his sense of honour was the more acute.

His wife turned and met his eyes, but her glance wavered before the fixed animosity of his stare.

She stood up, attempting to ignore him, but he stepped toward her quickly and seized her arm.

Now, defensively, she raised her eyes, summoning the courage of a cornered animal to her aid.

For a moment he did not speak. In his anger his face coloured a darker hue. He had never felt more keenly the outrage life had brought him with this woman, the abominable shaft of fate that had joined him with her. In that moment, by an insane, emotional syllogism, he connected her with his present perplexity; he blamed her for all his uncomprehended difficulties.

But before he could act or speak, she jerked her arm free, and, running around the table, reached the door. He followed her, cursing; she slammed the door in his face.

For an instant he rattled the knob like a madman, but when it yielded to his clumsy efforts she was gone.

A moment later his daughter entered the room. He did not speak to her. All his family irritated him; no one of them understood his difficulties. They were useless ones, symbols of his undeserved misfortunes.

He lost all thought of the unnecessary breakfast, deciding now, with a swiftly acquired impulse to action, to call on the President. He scarcely knew what he would say, or how he would act, but perhaps Gomez would lighten the abominable darkness a little and give some rationality to the actions of Figueredo Paniagua.

He dressed carefully and then rode over to the *Casa Amarilla*, but Gomez was not there. He had already left for Miraflores, having concluded all his business for the day.

Gonzales felt his necessity so keenly that he determined on the drive over to the Palace, and even began to execute it, proceeding half way along the Candelaria before turning back. It was a strange, swift enervation that made him change his mind.

He felt that the trip was useless and that nothing was to be gained from Gomez. His emotions, intangible and without definite foundations, were almost those of one defeated, who, incapable of action, stolidly awaits the inevitable.

It was at this moment that he thought of his little Gloria, the quiet, comforting one, and the recollection of her entered his mind like a caress. He knew

he must go and talk to her. The memory of her sweet naïveté enlivened his dull spirits. She believed in him, she honoured him, each of her shy glances was a tribute to his strength. She would give him courage.

## CHAPTER VI

ALMOST a day having passed since her coming to this little house, the girl found herself strangely happy and content. She was one unused to the environment of happiness, and so the charm of these moments came to her with a peculiar freshness of appeal.

Her recollections dealt only with days of sordid events. As far as she could remember, the spectre of the old woman haunted her, beating her whilst she was still a little girl, forcing her to tasks beyond her strength, and as she grew older and the flower of her charm unfolded, treating her no less harshly, but eyeing her now with an obscene and unmistakable expectation. Then followed those months of less and less veiled suggestion, culminated at last by direct commands. But she had been saved!

She was waiting eagerly now for the General's coming, whom, in her simplicity, she regarded as a fabulous one. But there was already a humanizing touch that made him real to her, that gave her the emotion of pity. His intimate monologue the day before had pictured his wife as the counterpart of her own haggish oppressor, a younger duplicate, but no less venomous. These thoughts made her flush with anger. How was it possible that such a man could be dishonoured!

Shortly after he had left her she had made the acquaintance of her neighbours and servants, old Pedro and his wife. She liked them at once; they treated her with consideration, and when the General's name was mentioned their faces became fully respectful.

Pedro's wife was a fat old woman, somewhat rheumatic, extremely garrulous, but full of motherly solicitations. But Gloria knew that Pedro was the more important of the two, and she liked him better.

He had a sinister aspect that proclaimed a great amount of ready courage and that did not frighten her at all. She trusted him, and she was assured of his loyalty to the General. She knew they had seen action together, and she felt that Pedro must have been fully adequate to the most perilous situation whenever personal valour could count. It was easy to imagine how terrifying he could be in anger; in his early days he must have dominated more than one scene by his mere physical presence.

He was a big fellow, a little bent now, but still commanding. He wore immoderate moustaches, half jet and half grey, and irregularly stained with tobacco. His walk was astonishingly light, almost feline; there was nothing stolid about him; he seemed to be always listening, to be cat-like, alert. But he had a gentle voice, and when he spoke to Gloria he removed his great hat respectfully.

In the morning little Gloria and Pedro's fat *señora* had gone down to Gradillos San Jacinto and with some of the money left the day before they had bought a score of feminine things that the old woman carried back with them, talking without intermission during the whole trip. The girl gave her only a perfunctory attention, but this silken chatter was not offensive; it made her feel at ease, indeed. She liked Pedro's wife.

As she dressed for the General's anticipated visit she felt wholly at ease; it seemed the normal thing that he was coming; she had already adapted herself to her good fortune. She was one who had never looked forward to a future, and so she had readily accepted the immediate moment. Even now she had no thoughts, nor speculated anything, upon any days to come. Life had not given her the habit of anticipations.

She put on a light blue frock, and, walking out into the garden, pulled some orange blossoms and fastened them in her hair. Looking in the glass,

she was surprised at the composure of her face; the full, curiously shaped lips were smiling, her broad forehead was without lines, the eyebrows were arched sharply over her large, half-slanting eyes that had already lost their brooding glints.

She was satisfied with her appearance. It did not occur to her to wonder whether or not she was intrinsically charming; the General would like her, she felt assured.

At last she heard his motor stop in front of the house, and she ran to the door to meet him. He was frowning as he crossed the pavement, but as she took his hands, leading him eagerly into the little room, the lines dissolved from his features. Her welcome was warming; he was touched already by the atmosphere of her charm and sympathy.

"Look, *señor!*" she exclaimed. "Pedro and I have changed everything here. Isn't it pretty now? I'm very glad!"

"What have you done since yesterday?" he asked.

"Waited for you!" she said.

"Do you like it here?"

"Oh, I'm going to be really happy," she answered.

It was impossible to doubt her. Her simplicity was incapable of evasion, and she accepted the meagre gift of this place with an almost absurd delight. In his present mood her appreciation stirred him unusually and it lessened his sense of bitterness.

He sat down and began to talk to her. She sat close to him, touching him with her little hands, fingering his coat-collar, his sleeves, his necktie, occasionally smoothing her hand gently over his hair.

"I'm tired," he said. "I've been tired for months now, and for some reason worried, Glorina. Perhaps I'm getting to be an old man. No doubt that's the reason why I brought you here—I've been wondering about that. It may be I imagine that I can steal some of the secret of your youth."

"Don't come here to tell me that!" she exclaimed. "I'll give you anything I can, but you are not an old man, *señor!* You wouldn't let anybody say that but yourself!"

"Things grow harder for me," he went on. "I have many enemies—too many for an old man."

The girl straightened a little, and something communicated from this spontaneous gesture made him raise his eyes and meet her own. Her eyebrows were drawn down, their arch destroyed; the slantwise eyes had narrowed and her full lips were compressed. Under her dusky skin a fluctuant colour warmed her cheeks.

"I'll kill any one of them you say!" she exclaimed.

For a moment her ferocity surprised him. Then, seeing her small face, her rigid little body, her slim hands clenched ineffectually on her breast, he laughed. But he was pleased. Her words recalled some long-forgotten emotions, some old events, some of the valorous memories of his younger days. She had the spirit that had been common to all of them then, the old spirit . . . the forgotten spirit. . . .

"I believe you would!" he murmured.

Her words had been the solvent of his depression. He began to talk to her lightly, and presently they were both laughing. After a time they went outdoors to look at the orange trees, and here they found old Pedro, who joined them a few moments, spoke something about the badness of things and then discreetly disappeared.

Gonzales found that he was restless; the afternoon was unusually warm; he suggested that they get in the motor and drive up into the Avila. The girl was delighted with the prospect.

They took that little road that mounts and dips like a wave and descends at last into La Guayra. Just outside of the city they passed a pair of Assyrian pedlars coming in with a pack from the seaport; Gonzales stopped the car and bought the girl one of those curious necklaces the natives make over in Trinidad. Farther out, a train, going northward, passed across the face of a

cliff beyond an intervening valley and was lost like a toy in the impenetrable green. They could hear its whistle, sounding like the call of a far bird, from nowhere.

The girl was moved; she drew closer to Gonzales.

"Life is very big," she said, simply. "I don't know anything about it. I have never lived yet. You must teach me life!"

She met his eyes with a glance that confided her admiration and her dreams. She almost seemed pitiful then—and, after all, he thought, pity is not only for those who are old. She gave him a renewed sense of strength. In the atmosphere of her abounding faith he felt remote from all forebodings.

He no longer sought the explanation of his impulses toward her, he had no desire to rationalize the act that had carried her away from that sinister *Puento de Hierro*. He accepted her; she was a necessary one.

Several hours passed rapidly and they had to turn back at last to reach the city before nightfall. When Gonzales parted from her that afternoon it was with a real regret. The enlivening hours remained with him for some time. It was not until later in the evening that his depression returned.

## CHAPTER VII

For more than a month he saw her every day. The news of his presumed infatuation leaked out, of course, and he knew that some of his friends laughed at him; he was indifferent.

One day he overheard several of them talking of his affair.

"Who is she?" the speaker said. "Ha! one of those delightful ones from that row near El Valle station—you understand! No, I haven't seen her."

These allusions did not anger him; they even gave him a measure of pride. At least no one could claim he was entirely old. They believed the worst; that was excellent!

Of course, his wife found out, for no such thing is a secret very long in that city. It produced some improvement in her. It may have given her a certain fear. Her vulgarities were less obvious, and sometimes she was almost genial. As for his son and daughter, they made no sign. They were acquainted with the ways of their country.

Had it not been for his political difficulties, he would have been almost content in these days. But the intrigues that he felt were afoot still eluded him. Figueredo Paniagua was thoroughly obnoxious; as far as possible the General avoided him.

Sometimes, alone, he writhed despairingly at his own cowardice. In any moment he could make this man show his cards, whatever they were—he could go to Gomez and demand his removal. An open trial of strength would be bound to follow. Even Gomez, if he were indeed inimical, might hesitate, for the General felt that he was still to be feared. There were still many Gonzalistas; he was still a *caudillo*.

Yet he felt that the subtle insults of Paniagua, the contemptuous air of the man, were purposely designed to make him act; and so he was afraid and shrank from the issue. He temporized with his necessity, suffering the insolences of his subordinate under the persuasion that the moment to strike had not yet arrived.

But the very necessity of another conflict appalled him. He was tired and he felt old. Why could not things go on as they were, quietly? Nature would soon remove him from the path of the ambitious ones!

He had his instants of angry pride and the old strength seemed to return to him, but they were always neutralized by the coming back of his weak hesitation.

He was seldom at home now, for the sight of familiar things irritated him.

He even went less to his café, preferring to spend his evenings with the little Gloria. She always ministered to him, soothing his vanity, assuaging his pride. Her belief in him was entire; she never questioned his strength. The

sincerity of her simple admiration warmed him. He felt a real tenderness for her. He persuaded himself that it was well to be with her, for he believed that she would finally give him the full measure of resolution.

Gloria was still living in the moment, wholly content and very proud. Gonzales' position, his name, his honour, seemed almost a mystical thing, something precious, something worth giving a life for. These emotions were easy to her ardent simplicity.

She often talked about him to old Pedro. He told her of the early days, when they were both young, and had little to lose.

"Ha!" exclaimed Pedro, "he was a strong *caudillo* then! They were afraid of him!"

"They're afraid of him now!" interrupted the girl, her slanting eyes widely opened. "He has many enemies; he says so—but they're all afraid of him."

Pedro nodded abstractedly.

"They were afraid of him then," he went on, renewing the thread of his reminiscence, the valorous past. "I think he could have gone higher, *senorita*. They were all afraid of us. For example, *senorita* . . ."

The old man took off his enormous hat, resting it on his knee. It was twilight and the sun fell over his face, making red shadows in the deeply carven wrinkles. An old scar, dividing the edge of his chin, seemed to pulse a little in the last crimson light.

He lifted his face, staring westward toward El Calvario. His eyes fastened themselves upon the little chapel of the Virgin of Lourdes.

"That was the last fight we had to make," he said. "They sent old Don Miguel up against us and he had more than a thousand men with new rifles. It was hard with us: *Caramba!* how we all cursed! Don Gonzales swore he'd slit Don Miguel's throat, and all of us said the same; we thought it was just our manner of speaking. But the General meant his words, *senorita!*

"Here is the way he did it: he sent for me in the night and we went down together to their camp. You squirmed up on your belly through a field of cane and the two sentinels were playing cards at the edge of the clearing with a cane fire burning at the side. You'd see the smoke go across their faces like a cloud, and then their heads would show up again with their mouths grinning at each other.

"When the time came we hit them over their heads so that they never made much of a sound. My General took the blanket from one and wrapped it about him; he put on the fellow's hat and I waited. He went into the camp and all you could hear was little noises such as you expect in the night, *senorita*. Presently Don Gonzales came back and I could see that he was smiling. I knew that he had kept his word. After that, it wasn't long until they made peace with us . . ."

The old man's voice trailed off in a regretful cadence as if old dreams troubled him then, the sinister, appealing wraiths of unfulfilled adventures, of exploits that his memory would have prized, cut short by the struggle's unexpected end.

But the girl had no regrets, for she was already lost in the fervours of her imagination.

Her heart seemed to open widely to these past heroisms; the knowledge of them gave her a new life and obliterated for all time the unworthy memories of her other days. She walked in a different world now, she played a different rôle. For her, the deeds of the General in the past were still living things, continuing in the present—and she had her part in them.

Of course old Pedro's tales enhanced her hero and enlarged her tenderness for him. In these final days she charmed him immeasurably, serving his pride so completely that he almost lived in the atmosphere of a forgetful illusion. Her adequate tribute to his other days enabled him to forget the moment, to overlook his temporizing and his immediate weakness.

He ignored Figueredo Paniagua; he was really contemptuous of the man. He draped himself in the cloak of his past accomplishments, as if it were an armour. He persuaded himself that he was strong enough to cope with any intrigue, but he did nothing.

Certain rumours were becoming common property now; some of his friends endeavoured to warn him. It was pretty well known that Paniagua had easy access to Gomez these days, and the origin of General Gonzales' influence was recalled. His position was the result of an early compromise; he held it because he had been a strong *caudillo*. The interested ones could divine that Gomez had no reason to favour him if there were nothing more to fear from his strength. But he laughed at his advisers and the ease of his contempt reassured them.

One evening, with Gloria, he told her more than he ever had before about his present position, gilding its seriousness with his recently acquired contempt. She was troubled, but she laughed with him over the futility of his enemies.

"I intend to give Figueredo Paniagua a few more weeks," he said, "and then it will be better for him and four or five others to leave the city. I'm tired of waiting, little one. I'm about to act."

He stood in front of her, smiling.

In the dim light his erect figure had an air of youthful courage, and his words were wholly convincing. He believed them himself. He believed that he was about to show his hand; it seemed worth while now; he had gained a sweet audience.

She looked at him with all the fervour of her tender admiration. The faint light concealed the lines of his face, there were shadows that dyed his whitening hair, and her simple faith was supreme. She breathed quickly, seeing the glamorous, exciting days before her. She knew she would help him!

But her heart was not without its troubling fears. When he left her that evening she lingered at the door longer than usual, holding him with low spoken words and she watched until his car was out of sight and the dark street empty and noiseless. But just before she went indoors she was surprised to hear another car come up the street. It passed with dimmed headlights, turned at the corner where he had turned, and again the thoroughfare was without sound.

It was not until late the next morning that she learned of his death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

After he left her he went first to *La Francia*. It was not recalled that he spent a long time in this place. They remembered, with a questionable significance, that a stranger had called for him there earlier in the evening, and had gone without waiting.

Early the next morning his body was found in the San Juan river; his car was deserted in the street.

There was a purple wound between his eyes, probably the result of a blow, and in his breast there were half a dozen knife thrusts.

The President issued a proclamation offering a reward for the perpetrators. In *La Francia* they laughed at that. It was generally conceded that no one would have dared this attempt without Gomez's consent.

Old Fernandez, speaking to a group there, had some very respected comments to make.

"Three months ago I warned him. Several weeks ago I told him it would be better either to act or leave the city. Better the last, no doubt. His work was done here—there comes a time when every man's work is finished. Then you can watch, it's better to watch anyway! Then you have the opportunity of observing the folly of action. But there was some sort of a woman, ah! All men after fifty should be required to enter a monastery."

Dr. Fernandez and three or four others went to his home, having a zestful curiosity. The younger men entered the house with countenances revealing a certain solemnity, but old Fernandez

was faintly smiling. The incident had yielded him some agreeable meditations; his mind enjoyed the contemplating of futilities.

Somewhere in the house Virginia's parrot was calling persistently: "*Perichito, perichito, dami la pata, dami la pata!*"

The girl met the visitors and took them into the room where the General's body was lying. There was a crucifix at his head, and the lighted candles flickered in the dark room like symbols of frailty. The girl's face was tense; her customary abruptness was accentuated, but she showed no signs of extravagant grief.

In the room the silence was broken by the monotonous lamentations of the General's wife. Her obvious grief seemed natural now and the visitors, accustomed to the plastic souls of their people, regarded it without surprise.

She sat in a big chair, her elbows were supported on her knees, her face was hidden in her hands, and she rocked back and forth. The fluttering of her dress stirred the air near the candles and now and then they flickered violently.

Others began to come into the room and Dr. Fernandez and his party left. In the hall they met Ismael, the General's son. His face was very white, he looked a little frightened, save in the expression of his mouth, which was firm and seemed to indicate a half-formed determination. He beckoned to Fernandez and the two stood aside.

"What is it?" asked the old man.

The boy hesitated, finding his question difficult.

When he spoke he did not meet Fernandez's eyes, but gazed down morosely at the floor.

"What is your opinion, *senor doctor?*" he asked.

"I don't understand," replied Fernandez.

Ismael raised his face and his features expressed an emotion of distressful perplexity. There was a curious light of pleading in his eyes.

"I thought you might know, *senor doctor,*" he said. "Who was it? Something is expected of me; I must do something!"

The old man regarded him with a faint smile, that was not without its touch of compassion. He understood, in a measure, the conflict of emotions that assailed the boy's ease. He answered him gravely.

"I don't know," he replied. "Nobody knows. Your father had enemies; I think it's useless for you to do anything. You'd better try to forget."

Ismael lowered his face again but the look of relief that manifested itself on his features was not lost to the old man. He comprehended: the boy had desired this assurance and justification. Now he was freed from a terrifying responsibility. Nobody knew. It was useless to do anything. Nobody could be blamed for accepting the inevitable, for doing nothing. He took Dr. Fernandez's hand and pressed it gratefully.

"If I could find out—" he muttered.

Fernandez turned and rejoined his friends.

"The end of another drama," he remarked, "with ironies to make overtones to the central tragedy. The boy, having a certain amount of romance about him, was horribly afraid that he would be expected to accomplish some sort of a requital for the injury to his father's honour. I put him at ease, *senores.* What would be the use? I'm tired of romance. Let these people forget all about honour—it's a pretence that will do them harm. They have other pretences that are safer, especially the excellent *senora,* eh?"

Old Fernandez laughed. He took one of his companions by the arm, and drew intimately close to him. As he spoke the others smiled, in appreciation of his drollery.

"We regret our friend's death," he said, "but consider what an admirable thing it is for his wife. I tell you, this life is full of compensations, balances. They had a holy time together; it was a stiff game between them; but now she forgets all that. It pleases her to

believe that she has lost something and thereby she gains a very agreeable martyrdom—a touching circumstance, *caballeros!* That old lady has an agreeable prospect for the rest of her days. It is her right now—you will not be heartless enough to deny it; none of us—to exact compassion and comfort and notice from all her acquaintances for her remaining years. She will wear melancholy like garb, like a luxurious garment. How excellent! How much more subtle and interesting than some romantic vengeance. We would not enjoy that. It would hurt our self-respect."

They all wandered back to *La Francia*, with the old doctor dominating the stage. His discourse was highly agreeable and it was admitted that he had never talked with greater finesse.

## CHAPTER IX

A LITTLE after noon the girl Gloria was in the garden when old Pedro brought her the news. There was a little kiosco, painted a fresh green in that place, and the girl was sitting here, placidly, almost without thought, in pleasant communion with the peaceful silence. Several tall palms stood near like tireless sentinels. She was looking out toward the purpled ridges of the Avila, and now and then her sight was faintly blurred by the coming and going of a school of gnats, passing back and forth in front of her eyes, like the fluttering of a diaphanous veil.

She heard the gate open and knew from the light, deliberate tread that Pedro had come in. She gave no thought to his presence, not even turning to look at him.

In a moment she saw him walking along the path, approaching her. She raised her eyes and smiled; and then, seeing his face, the smile vanished.

It was obvious that some profound trouble had come to him, altering his entire aspect. The stoop of his tall body was accentuated, his arms seemed to dangle without life at his sides. His face was bent, crisscrossed by numberless lines, and the immoderate moustaches drooped as if they had withered on his lip.

At once the girl was assailed by a grave premonition, an uncomprehended portent that brought an acute expression of alarm to her face.

She began to tremble a little; it was impossible to sit quietly; she stood up and stared at old Pedro intently.

"*Que te passa!*" she demanded.

The old man's gaze met hers, but his eyes did not appear to mirror her image; there was a hopeless dumbness in them, that, in the extremity of some inward devastation, made sight itself a useless effort. He opened his lips and spoke very low.

"We were all too old," he said. "They were too strong for us at last. I didn't even suspect. They've killed him; we've seen him for the last time."

The words, for all their tone of abundant sorrow, implied also a deep resignation, an acknowledgment of inevitable defeat.

"We were too old," he repeated. "We were too old . . ."

The girl had not moved; she still stared at the old man and she understood his words fully.

In this instant of unwarned revealment, into the complexity of her emotions there entered a strange, accusing bitterness. Certain remembered incidents came back to her, unheeded in the seconds of their enactment—but now she realized that she should have foreseen.

He had spoken so often of his enemies and come to her so frequently with that countenance of worry and depression. How futile she had been! A useless one—and she could have saved him!

But her mind had too great a simplicity to hold for many moments any complexity of thought. In a few seconds only an overwhelming anger remained, a rage that was cunning in its supreme naïveté. She knew none of the circumstances of his death, nor needed to know them now. It sufficed that a hid-

den hand had waited for him and struck the dishonouring blow. He was gone—but his honour remained, in her hands, for her justification, for her full cherishing. Whatever his death had taken from her—his saving kindness, the new life, the forgetfulness of former degradations—it had not deprived her of this most precious legacy.

She was no longer trembling. Her simple emotion had made her immeasurably strong. She saw only one aim before her, a single goal. The power of her illusion beat in her veins, bounded maddeningly at her wrists. It almost swept the pathos from her small, erect figure, giving her the false, convincing aspect of one whose illusive belief becomes, by the strength of faith, a truth.

Old Pedro stood as before, staring down at the ground in helpless immobility. Many times in the past, listening to his reminiscences of valorous other days, she had found him almost heroic. But now, without question, she understood that *she* was the dominant one.

She stepped toward him, raised her hand, and gripped his arm.

"We have *our* part to do now," she said.

She gazed into his face and he met her eyes.

His glance still held its dumb hopelessness—he did not understand.

For a moment she was irritated; he was an old man; she felt a swift anger at the mere fact of his useless age. The emotion passed and she still retained his arm.

"Don't you understand?"

"What do you mean, *senorita?*"

She held his eyes with the fervour of her own, summoning all her determination to arouse him, to make him see.

"You must do what I say!" she said.

He stared at her face and a new expression came into his features, a yielding one.

Without comprehending, the detached power of her simple purpose dominated him. He waited for her words.

"You see?" she asked. "You must do everything I say!"

He slowly nodded his head and at this sign of his acquiescence a faint, bitter smile curved on her lips. She released his arm and her glance dropped as her face became thoughtful. Freed from the spell of her glowing eyes, something of Pedro's sorrowful helplessness returned and in the manner of a soliloquy he began to speak.

"I was almost a boy when I met with him, *senorita*," he said. "We were all young then, Don Gonzales and I and the rest of us, and we loved no one so well as our enemies, because when you are young your enemies are the zest of your life. They were the zest of men like us, *senorita*. Ah, the chances we could take then, when we were young, when Don Gonzales and I and the rest of us were all young together! And we had nothing to lose; we had nothing but our hopes! You can't lose your hopes when you're young! We had our nights and days together and our dreams; the wild things we did! For every friend we made ten enemies—it didn't matter, the young ones were our friends and only the old whom we despised were our enemies. Of course, and we were strong when we had nothing to lose. We never thought of it—it was a long time ahead before we'd be old . . ."

She paid no heed to his words, for reminiscences meant nothing to her now. For her there was no past, no past of anyone, not even her own, but only the overmastering necessity of the present. Once more she seized old Pedro's arm, bringing her uplifted face close under his eyes.

"Hear me, Pedro," she said. "You must know something; you are the only one. Think now, very carefully: who killed him? You can tell, you can guess! Maybe you suspect seven, twelve men; tell me about each one of them. What does it matter to us that maybe only one killed him; tell me ten names; that will make sure of the one!"

Old Pedro looked down at the girl, staring into her intent, motionless face, and the change in his mood was reflected in his own face. Some of her

savage ardour, her simple purpose, seemed to transpire into his blood, renewing his strength.

He began to understand her and because, like herself, he too was a simple one, he found nothing futile in the fervour of her purpose. His head dropped a little in a curious gesture of contrition.

"Forgive me, *senorita*," he murmured. "I forgot that at least *you* were young."

## CHAPTER X

THE old man asked her for a day or two to consider and investigate.

"We must count in Figueredo Paniagua as the bad genius," he said. "But I must watch him and study his friends. It will be well to include them all, his intimates; we don't know; we can't be sure."

In the evenings he appeared outside the cafés, standing in the shadows, walking slowly before the doors.

He waited near *La Francia*, *La Iberia*, and down the plaza below the *Panaderia;* he haunted *La España.*

He watched Figueredo Paniagua and noted his friends, the ones who were with him repeatedly, the intimates.

Once he followed the General to Miraflores, and when he returned took special note of the men with whom he drank that night. This was a pleasant work; he made a sinister figure in the Plaza.

Meanwhile the girl waited in the little house, her thoughts dwelling only on her purpose.

That other past, the time before she met him, was gone from her memories, a trivial and degrading thing. Her life, it seemed to her, had begun with him, revealing every significance, and presently, with the fulfilment of his honour that remained in her sole keeping, it would end.

She often sat in the garden, watching the Avila, and waiting. In a measure, her physical frailty was scarcely apparent now, for the strength of her illusion had dignified her. She was like one exalted by brave, false dreams. It was her fortune and her fate to have no doubts, to accept her aim with an absolute faith and a certainty of its abounding justification. Perhaps she was a little enviable now, with the courage of belief.

Because she never even questioned herself, she presented in these days an aspect reminiscent of mystery.

Often old Pedro's wife came in and talked to her; the old woman's eyes were red and her garrulity was unchecked. She talked of Gonzales incessantly; the murmur of her gentle monotonous voice rather pleased the girl.

Then, one morning, Pedro made his report and they spoke together for a long time.

"We can never be sure," he told her, "but it must have been one of the four or five; that's my best opinion, *señorita.* You find them always together, they meet in the evening, they form their own group, they are very confidential."

"Only five?"

"It seems no more than that, although you can't be sure. We'll never be sure. And after they've drunk together Paniagua often takes them with him, the three or four of them and himself, and they go to his house, and later he comes to the door and they stand there laughing a while before they say good-night."

The girl smiled.

"A good thing for us."

"Yes, a convenient custom."

Pedro nodded his head vigorously in confirmation of his belief, and his ponderous moustaches swayed rhythmically on his lip. He waited for the girl to speak.

A deep colour had come into her cheeks; her head was tilted back and a pulsation was visible at the side of her slender throat. Her hands were tensed in her lap; her eyes stared into the distance as if, far on the ridges of the green and purple mountains, she discerned a significant vision, unseen in the inadequacy of common sight.

All the mystery of her simple ardour

was apparent then, but not explained. And the old man who watched sought no explanation, for he was as unquestioning as herself. He accepted her then, and believed in her.

She lowered her face; she met his eyes.

"We'll go there to-night," she said.

## CHAPTER XI

In that tropical city, however warm the days, a cool air blows in after nightfall, coming over from El Valvario and the picturesque ranges of the Avila. It is a sea-breeze, that, blowing south, has gathered to itself the tang of tropical forests, and, to the imaginative, a romantic portent. The city, a sinister gem set in the magnificent grasp of the mountains, receives it as a phenomenon that lends character. It blows suggestively through the streets, rationalizing the improbable, expressive of the people to whom it comes, a symbol alike of subtle feeling and passionate emotion.

Now, as usual, it was cool, and Pedro wore an old cloak and loomed enormous at the side of the girl. Yet, even now, in the concealing darkness, he did not dominate her. His head was inclined in order to listen for any word, and in the bending of the great body there was an expression of his dependence and submission.

That night she had all the necessary qualities of one who is the leader in an improbable adventure. Her thoughts were without complexity, being fixed on a single aim. She did not weaken her case with doubts—the doubts that a touch of pity might have given her, or fear, or lack of faith. Her illusion was supreme and secure and so she was without faltering.

She loitered in the Plaza on the outskirts of a crowd that had gathered to hear the band. They were playing dance music, but she was little used to irony and the triviality of it did not make her smile. Meanwhile Pedro was visiting all the favourite places and when he returned to her he had located, at the *Iberia*, the ones they sought.

"We don't know," he said, "but it is probable they will come at the usual time. Let us go and wait."

She nodded in agreement and they passed around the Archbishop's palace and into San Juan. They were silent, for to neither was there any necessity of speech.

General Figueredo Paniagua's house had the distinction of being set back from the street. It did not come down familiarly to the pavement, but unlike most of the homes, even those of the better class, it had grounds in front, terraced with palms and shrubbery.

When they reached this goal Pedro looked up and down the street cautiously; no one seemed near or watching, so the two ran up the embankment of the terrace, and, choosing a clump of shrubs that bordered the walk, secluded themselves there.

It was not safe to talk nor did they have anything that needed saying. Pedro sat down, squatting like an Indian; for a time the girl remained standing, her body crouched a little and she peered through the bushes at the street.

Now and then they would hear footsteps; in the excitement her body would grow tense, although it was too early for their group and she did not expect them in this way. Pedro never moved; his figure maintained a sculpturesque immobility.

At last the girl tired and she kneeled on the grass beside the old man.

Through an opening in the leaves she could see the houses across the street. Some of the windows were still lighted and in one of them a woman was singing a love song. The voice was light but in the stillness of the thoroughfare it came clearly to their ears and they could hear the plaint of the words.

"*Tu faz hermosa . . .*"

For the first time since the legacy of honour had come into her keeping, memories returned to Gloria. The ten-

der words aroused her to wantings, to desires unfulfilled. Then the voice stopped; there was silence again; window by window the lights in the houses disappeared.

It was very quiet now for there was only the blundering sound of heavy insects taking wing and the stir of their obscure bodies in the grass.

Afterward she never remembered all the details of the adventure clearly.

For some reason, perhaps from the tenseness resulting from their long watch, they both acted prematurely, and not according to their plan.

It had been agreed in this way: if the General came alone they would dispose of him at once, otherwise no opportunity would come again that night. But if he came with his friends they would let them pass, creeping up to the porch and waiting until they reappeared, for the reason that all these men would be more helpless later.

It did not happen as they had proposed.

They saw the General alight from his car and there were three others with him. They were all laughing; someone was telling a story. The voice, announcing the dénouement, was very clear.

"The gentleman congratulated the mother," he said, "and remarked: 'A fine child; an unusual family resemblance. You could never mistake him—he looks just like *el amigo de su padre!*'"

They laughed again, and following Paniagua, came walking along the path.

Both the girl and old Pedro arose swiftly, crouching under the cover of the shrubbery and when they fired two of Paniagua's friends fell. That was a fortunate shot.

Then Pedro sprang out from behind the cover and General Figueredo Paniagua was amazingly swift. It was astonishing how well he met this last and direst of his emergencies. In the single instant elapsing between the double report and Pedro's savage emergence he had learned the direction of the attack and instinctively withdrawn the little jewelled weapon always in his pocket. There was no time for anything more.

Pedro's cloak swirled out from his body like the spread of sable wings. Both men fired in the same instant. The shots echoed across the lawn, it was still again, and the two men were erect, staring at each other through the darkness. The General was the first to fall; he toppled over very suddenly and sprawled on his face.

Old Pedro was still standing and in his immobility there was something sinisterly contemptuous, for he did not turn his face to the remaining adversary, but, as if lost in meditation, looked over the form of the fallen *caudillo*, not even deigning the inclination of his head.

Gloria called to him; the other man turned sharply at the astonishing sound of a woman's voice; he saw her emerge cat-like from the bushes and he was blinded by the repeated flash of her revolver. He fell sideways, cursing obscenely.

Then, before she could reach his side, Gloria observed Pedro sink to his knees, remaining a moment as if in an attitude of prayer. She ran toward him and his body flexed into her arms. She peered into his face; the eyes were closed; the mouth had dropped open; he was not breathing.

For a second, summoning all the strength of her determination, she held him thus, watching his face. At last she bent closer and as a tribute to his simple and unquestioning valour, she touched his lips with her own.

Now she raised her head, looking across the lawn toward the house.

Someone opened the door and she saw the shadow of a head peering out cautiously.

She drew away softly, creeping through the grass, and when she was behind the shrubbery again, she ran the length of the walk and reached the street.

Lights were appearing in the windows of the other houses, but the street was still empty.

She ran to the next corner and turned. If anyone saw her, it was too late to follow.

## CHAPTER XII

In the morning, with her purpose achieved, a profound lethargy had come into her spirits. Her first gladness had been superseded by a deep melancholy, almost a regret; it seemed to her that she had come to the end, the end of all significances—and henceforth she was useless.

But later in the day, little by little, she felt the appropriateness of a final ceremonial. It was then, for the first time, that she thought definitely of Pedro and regretted that he could not go with her.

She shrouded herself in the familiar mantilla that had hidden her face on the day of their first rendezvous. It was a long walk, but she was indifferent to the distance. When she reached the boulevard she turned westward, and the afternoon was far advanced when she came to the cemetery.

She walked to the fresh grave and stood looking down at the yellow earth. It was still unmarked, but there was the dignity of the other stones about it, bearing the name of his family. She read the familiar syllables—*Gonzales*—and a surge of pride returned. Unrecognized and unknown, her own obscurity had taken on now a measure of this name's glamour, and she had been the guardian of its honour.

Presently she heard footsteps in the gravel path, and turning she saw two women approaching. One was young; the other, middle-aged, leaned upon her arm. As Gloria watched she saw the older woman take out a handkerchief and touch the moisture of tears from her face.

The two were close now, and seeing the girl standing over the grave they stopped and stared at her. Suddenly Gloria knew them: this was his daughter and his wife.

She saw the tears in the wife's eyes, and despite their fundamental insincerity, they produced within her an acute depression. The daughter was frowning; the eyes of the two girls met and to both there came a mutual recognition. The countenance of Gonzales's daughter became clouded with the commingled emotions of anger and contempt. The wife still dabbed her tear-stained face.

Now, for the first time, Gloria achieved a flash of insight, and comprehended the measure of her futility. Looking at the wife, she knew a touch of life's ironic conditions. This other woman, the one with *his* name, had alone the right to tears, the permission of public sorrow, and she, however faithfully she had fulfilled a secret trust, was the ignored and contemptuous one.

The young girl was still frowning and Gloria, turning abruptly, walked away. The others took her place.

She did not look back, but passed slowly among the dead, like one of them. And, indeed, there was a kinship, for she had come to the end. She had no thoughts of her future, for without contemplation she understood its terms.

It was time now to return to the place where her great man had found her; the old woman would receive her. She was too indifferent to be appalled at the prospect of her degradation.

But life, at least, relenting or forgetful, had left her her illusion: dishonoured, she would still remember a significance in the name of honour!

# RAISON D'ETRE

By T. F. Mitchell

THE longevity convention was in session. No delegate was present under ninety. Naturally, discussion arose as to the reason for the piled-up years.

"Drinking causes early death," said one member. "Look at me. I am ninety-six because I never drank a drop!"

"Bosh," said a second. "Smoking is the early killer! I have never touched tobacco."

"I have lived so long because I Fletcherized," said a third.

And so on.

One man did not speak.

"What reason can you advance?" they asked of him.

He waved his hand disparagingly.

"You are all bachelors," he said. "So am I."

# IF I COULD BUT REMEMBER

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

IF I could but remember
  Why I loved you then,
I would try to love you
  Madly once again.

Was it for your kisses,
  Or a look or song?
With such vague remembrance
  Dare Love tarry long?

Love, like young Narcissus,
  Simple, dreaming elf,
May look in a pool of dreams—
  And come to love himself!

If I could but remember—
  Then I might forget
How another lady
  Clings, and loves me yet!

# BENEDICTION

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

## I

THE Baltimore Station was hot and crowded, so Lois was forced to stand by the telegraph desk for interminable, sticky seconds while a clerk with big front teeth counted and recounted a large lady's day message, to determine whether it contained the innocuous forty-nine words or the fatal fifty-one.

Lois, waiting, decided she wasn't quite sure of the address, so she took the letter out of her bag and ran over it again.

"*Darling*: it began—

"*I understand and I'm happier than life ever meant me to be. If I could give you the things you've always been in tune with—but I can't, Lois; we can't marry and we can't lose each other and let all this glorious love end in nothing.*

"*Until your letter came, dear, I'd been sitting here in the half dark thinking and thinking where I could go and ever forget you; abroad, perhaps, to drift through Italy or Spain and dream away the pain of having lost you where the crumbling ruins of older, mellower civilizations would mirror only the desolation of my heart—and then your letter came.*

"*Sweetest, bravest girl, if you'll wire me I'll meet you in Wilmington—till then I'll be here just waiting and hoping for every long dream of you to come true.*

"HOWARD."

She had read the letter so many times that she knew it word by word, yet it still startled her. In it she found many faint reflections of the man who wrote it—the mingled sweetness and sadness in his dark eyes, the furtive, restless excitement she felt sometimes when he talked to her, his dreamy sensuousness that lulled her mind to sleep, Lois was nineteen and very romantic and curious and courageous.

The large lady and the clerk having compromised on fifty words, Lois took a blank and wrote her telegram. And there were no overtones to the finality of her decision.

It's just destiny—she thought—it's just the way things work out in this blamed world. If cowardice is all that's been holding me back there won't be any more holding back. So we'll just let things take their course, and never be sorry.

The clerk scanned her telegram:

*Arrived Baltimore to-day spend day with my brother meet me Wilmington three P.M. Wednesday Love*

LOIS.

"Fifty-four cents," said the clerk admiringly.

And never be sorry—thought Lois—and never be sorry—

## II

TREES filtering light on to dappled grass. Trees like tall, languid ladies with feather fans coquetting airily with the ugly roof of the monastery. Trees like butlers, bending courteously over placid walks and paths. Trees, trees over the hills on either side and scattering out in clumps and lines and woods all through Maryland, delicate lace on the hems of many yellow fields,

dark opaque backgrounds for flowered bushes or wild climbing gardens.

Some of the trees were very gay and young, but the monastery trees were older than the monastery which, by true monastic standards, wasn't very old at all. And, as a matter of fact, it wasn't technically called a monastery, but only a seminary; nevertheless it shall be a monastery here despite its Victorian architecture or its Edward VII. additions, or even its Woodrow Wilsonian, patented, last-a-century roofing.

Out behind was the farm where half a dozen lay brothers were sweating lustily as they moved with deadly efficiency around the vegetable gardens. To the left, behind a row of elms, was an informal baseball diamond where three novices were being batted out by a fourth, amid great chasings and puffings and blowings. And in front as a great mellow bell boomed the half hour a swarm of black, human leaves were blown over the checker-board of paths under the courteous trees.

Some of these black leaves were very old with cheeks furrowed like the first ripples of a splashed pool. Then there was a scattering of middle-aged leaves whose forms when viewed in profile in their revealing gowns were beginning to be faintly unsymmetrical. These carried thick volumes of Thomas Aquinas and Henry James and Cardinal Mercier and Immanuel Kant and many bulging note-books filled with lecture data.

But most numerous were the young leaves; blond boys of nineteen with very stern, conscientious expressions; men in the late twenties with a keen self-assurance from having taught out in the world for five years—several hundreds of them, from city and town and country in Maryland and Pennsylvania and Virginia and West Virginia and Delaware.

There were many Americans and some Irish and some tough Irish and a few French, and several Italians and Poles, and they walked informally arm and arm with each other in twos and threes or in long rows, almost universally distinguished by the straight mouth and the considerable chin—for this was the Society of Jesus, founded in Spain five hundred years before by a tough-minded soldier who trained men to hold a breach or a salon, preach a sermon or write a treaty, and do it and not argue. . . .

Lois got out of a bus into the sunshine down by the outer gate. She was nineteen with yellow hair and eyes that people were tactful enough not to call green. When men of talent saw her in a street-car they often furtively produced little stub-pencils and backs of envelopes and tried to sum up that profile or the thing that the eyebrows did to her eyes. Later they looked at their results and usually tore them up with wondering sighs.

Though Lois was very jauntily attired in an expensively appropriate travelling affair, she did not linger to pat out the dust which covered her clothes, but started up the central walk with curious glances at either side. Her face was very eager and expectant, yet she hadn't at all that glorified expression that girls wear when they arrive for a Senior Prom at Princeton or New Haven; still, as there were no senior proms here, perhaps it didn't matter.

She was wondering what he would look like, whether she'd possibly know him from his picture. In the picture, which hung over her mother's bureau at home, he seemed very young and hollow-cheeked and rather pitiful, with only a well-developed mouth and an ill-fitting probationer's gown to show that he had already made a momentous decision about his life. Of course, he had been only nineteen then and now he was thirty-six—didn't look like that at all; in recent snap-shots he was much broader and his hair had grown a little thin—but the impression of her brother she had always retained was that of the big picture. And so she had always been a little sorry for him. What a life for a man! Seventeen years of preparation and he wasn't even

a priest yet—wouldn't be for another year.

Lois had an idea that this was all going to be rather solemn if she let it be. But she was going to give her very best imitation of undiluted sunshine, the imitation she could give even when her head was splitting or when her mother had a nervous breakdown or when she was particularly romantic and curious and courageous. This brother of hers undoubtedly needed cheering up, and he was going to be cheered up, whether he liked it or not.

As she drew near the great, homely front door she saw a man break suddenly away from a group, and, pulling up the skirts of his gown, run toward her. He was smiling, she noticed, and he looked very big and—and reliable. She stopped and waited, knew that her heart was beating unusually fast.

"Lois!" he cried, and in a second she was in his arms. She was suddenly trembling.

"Lois!" he cried again, "why, this is wonderful! I can't tell you, Lois, how *much* I've looked forward to this. Why, Lois, you're beautiful!"

Lois gasped.

His voice, though restrained, was vibrant with energy and that odd sort of enveloping personality she had thought that she only of the family possessed.

"I'm mighty glad, too—Kieth."

She flushed, but not unhappily, at this first use of his name.

"Lois—Lois—Lois," he repeated in wonder. "Child, we'll go in here a minute, because I want you to meet the rector and then we'll walk around because I have a thousand things to talk to you about."

His voice became graver. "How's Mother?"

She looked at him for a moment and then said something that she had not intended to say at all, the very sort of thing she had resolved to avoid.

"Oh, Kieth—she's—she's getting worse all the time, every way."

He nodded slowly as if he understood.

"Nervous, well—you can tell me about that later. Now—"

She was in a small study with a large desk, saying something to a little, jovial, white-haired priest who retained her hand for some seconds.

"So this is Lois!"

He said it as if he had heard of her for years.

He entreated her to sit down.

Two other priests arrived enthusiastically and shook hands with her and addressed her as "Kieth's little sister," which she found she didn't mind a bit.

How assured they seemed; she had expected a certain shyness, reserve at least. There were several jokes unintelligible to her, which seemed to delight everyone, and the little Father Rector referred to the trio of them as "dim old monks," which she appreciated, because of course they weren't monks at all. She had a lightning impression that they were especially fond of Kieth—the Father Rector had called him "Kieth" and one of the others had kept a hand on his shoulder all through the conversation. Then she was shaking hands again and promising to come back a little later for some ice-cream, and smiling and smiling and being rather absurdly happy . . . she told herself that it was because Kieth was so delighted in showing her off.

Then she and Kieth were strolling along a path, arm in arm, and he was informing her what an absolute jewel the Father Rector was.

"Lois," he broke off suddenly, "I want to tell you before we go any farther how much it means to me to have you come up here. I think it was—mighty sweet of you. I know what a gay time you've been having."

Lois gasped. She was not prepared for this. At first when she had conceived the plan of taking the hot journey down to Baltimore, staying the night with a friend and then coming out to see her brother, she had felt rather consciously virtuous, hoped he wouldn't be priggish or resentful about her not having come before—but walking here with him under the trees

seemed such a little thing, and surprisingly a happy thing.

"Why, Kieth," she said quickly, "you know I couldn't have waited a day longer. I saw you when I was five, but of course I didn't remember, and how could I have gone on without practically ever having seen my only brother."

"It was mighty sweet of you, Lois," he repeated.

Lois blushed—he *did* have personality.

"I want you to tell me all about yourself," he said after a pause. "Of course, I have a general idea what you and mother did in Europe those fourteen years, and then we were all so worried, Lois, when you had pneumonia and couldn't come down with mother—let's see, that was two years ago—and then, well, I've seen your name in the papers, but it's all been so unsatisfactory. I haven't known you, Lois."

She found herself analyzing his personality as she analyzed the personality of every man she met. She wondered if the effect of—of intimacy that he gave was bred by his constant repetition of her name. He said it as if he loved the word, as if it had an inherent meaning to him.

"Then you were at school," he continued.

"Yes, at Farmington. Mother wanted me to go to a convent—but I didn't want to."

She cast a side glance at him to see if he would resent this.

But he only nodded slowly.

"Had enough convents abroad, eh?"

"Yes—and Kieth, convents are different there anyway. Here even in the nicest ones there are so many *common* girls."

He nodded again.

"Yes," he agreed, "I suppose there are, and I know how you feel about it. It grated on me here, at first, Lois, though I wouldn't say that to anyone but you; we're rather sensitive, you and I, to things like this."

"You mean the men here?"

"Yes, some of them of course were fine, the sort of men I'd always been thrown with, but there were others; a man named Regan, for instance—I hated the fellow, and now he's about the best friend I have. A wonderful character, Lois; you'll meet him later. Sort of man you'd like to have with you in a fight."

Lois was thinking that Kieth was the sort of man she'd like to have with *her* in a fight.

"How did you—how did you first happen to do it?" she asked, rather shyly, "to come here, I mean. Of course, mother told me the story about the Pullman car."

"Oh, that—" he looked rather annoyed.

"Tell me that. I'd like to hear you tell it."

"Oh, it's nothing, except what you probably know. It was evening and I'd been riding all day and thinking about—about a hundred things, Lois, and then suddenly I had a sense that someone was sitting across from me, felt that he'd been there for some time and had a vague idea that he was another traveller. All at once he leaned over toward me and I heard a voice say —'I want you to be a priest, that's what I want.' Well, I jumped up and cried out—'Oh, my God, not that!'—made an idiot of myself before about twenty people; you see there wasn't anyone sitting there at all. A week after that I went to the Jesuit College in Philadelphia and crawled up the last flight of stairs to the rector's office on my hands and knees."

There was another silence, and Lois saw that her brother's eyes wore a far away look, that he was staring unseeingly out over the sunny fields. She was stirred by the modulations of his voice and the sudden silence that seemed to flow about him when he finished speaking.

She noticed now that his eyes were of the same fibre as hers, with the green left out, and that his mouth was much gentler, really, than in the picture—or was it that the face had grown

up to it lately? He was getting a little bald just on top of his head. She wondered if that was from wearing a hat so much. It seemed awful for a man to grow bald and no one to care about it.

"Were you—pious when you were young, Kieth?" she asked. "You know what I mean. Were you religious? If you don't mind these personal questions."

"Yes," he said with his eyes still far away—and she felt that his intense abstraction was as much a part of his personality as his attention. "Yes, I suppose I was, when I was—sober."

Lois thrilled slightly.

"Did you drink?"

He nodded.

"I was on the way to making a bad hash of things." He smiled, and, turning his grey eyes on her, changed the subject.

"Child, tell me about mother. I know it's been awfully hard for you there, lately. I know you've had to sacrifice a lot and put up with a great deal, and I want you to know how fine of you I think it is. I feel, Lois, that you're sort of taking the place of both of us there."

Lois thought quickly how little she had sacrificed; how lately she had constantly avoided her nervous, half-invalid mother.

"Youth shouldn't be sacrificed to age, Kieth," she said steadily.

"I know," he sighed, "and you oughtn't to have the weight on your shoulders, child. I wish I were there to help you."

She saw how quickly he had turned her remark and instantly she knew what this quality was that he gave off. He was *sweet*. Her thoughts went off on a side-track and then she broke the silence with an odd remark.

"Sweetness is hard," she said suddenly.

"What?"

"Nothing," she denied in confusion. "I didn't mean to speak aloud. I was thinking of something—of a conversation with a man named Freddy Kebble."

"Maury Kebble's brother?"

"Yes," she said, rather surprised to think of him having known Maury Kebble. Still, there was nothing strange about it. "Well, he and I were talking about sweetness a few weeks ago. Oh, I don't know—I said that a man named Howard—that a man I knew was sweet and he didn't agree with me and we began talking about what sweetness in a man was. He kept telling me I meant a sort of soppy softness, but I knew I didn't—yet I didn't know exactly how to put it. I see now. I meant just the opposite. I suppose real sweetness is a sort of hardness—and strength."

Kieth nodded.

"I see what you mean. I've known old priests who had it."

"I'm talking about young men," she said, rather defiantly.

"Oh!"

They had reached the now deserted baseball diamond, and, pointing her to a wooden bench, he sprawled full length on the grass.

"Are these *young* men happy here, Kieth?"

"Don't they look happy, Lois?"

"I suppose so, but those *young* ones, those two we just passed—have they—are they—"

"Are they signed up?" he laughed. "No, but they will be next month."

"Permanently?"

"Yes—unless they break down mentally or physically. Of course, in a discipline like ours a lot drop out."

"But those *boys*. Are they giving up fine chances outside—like you did?"

He nodded.

"Some of them."

"But, Kieth, they don't know what they're doing. They haven't had any experience of what they're missing."

"No, I suppose not."

"It doesn't seem fair. Life has just sort of scared them at first. Do they all come in so *young?*"

"No, some of them have knocked around, led pretty wild lives—Regan, for instance."

"I should think that sort would be

better," she said meditatively, "men that had *seen* life."

"No," said Kieth earnestly, "I'm not sure that knocking about gives a man the sort of experience he can communicate to others. Some of the broadest men I've known have been absolutely rigid about themselves. And reformed libertines are a notoriously intolerant class. Don't you think so, Lois?"

She nodded, still meditative, and he continued:

"It seems to me that when one weak person goes to another, it isn't help they want; it's a sort of companionship in guilt, Lois. After you were born, when mother began to get nervous she used to go and weep with a certain Mrs. Comstock. Lord, it used to make me shiver. She said it comforted her, poor old mother. No, I don't think that to help others you've got to show yourself at all. Real help comes from a stronger person whom you respect. And their sympathy is all the bigger because it's impersonal."

"But people want human sympathy," objected Lois. "They want to feel the other person's been tempted."

"Lois, in their hearts they want to feel that the other person's been weak. That's what they mean by human."

"Here in this old monastery, Lois," he continued with a smile, "they try to get all that self-pity and pride in our own wills out of us right at the first. They put us to scrubbing floors—and other things. It's like that idea of saving your life by losing it. You see, we sort of feel that the less human a man is, in your sense of human, the better servant he can be to humanity. We carry it out to the end, too. When one of us dies his family can't even have him then. He's buried here under a plain wooden cross with a thousand others."

His tone changed suddenly and he looked at her with a great brightness in his grey eyes.

"But way back in a man's heart there are some things he can't get rid of—and one of them is that I'm awfully in love with my little sister."

With a sudden impulse she knelt beside him in the grass, and, leaning over, kissed his forehead.

"You're hard, Kieth," she said, "and I love you for it—and you're sweet."

## III

BACK in the reception room Lois met a half dozen more of Kieth's particular friends; there was a young man named Jarvis, rather pale and delicate looking, who, she knew, must be a grandson of old Mrs. Jarvis at home, and she mentally compared this ascetic with a brace of his riotous uncles.

And there was Regan with a scarred face and piercing intent eyes that followed her about the room and often rested on Kieth with something very like worship. She knew then what Kieth had meant about "a good man to have with you in a fight."

He's the missionary type—she thought vaguely—China or something.

"I want Kieth's sister to show us what the shimmy is," demanded one young man with a broad grin.

Lois laughed.

"I'm afraid the Father Rector would send me shimmying out of the gate. Besides, I'm not an expert."

"I'm sure it wouldn't be best for Jimmy's soul, anyway," said Kieth solemnly. "He's inclined to brood about things like shimmys. They were just starting to do the—maxixe, wasn't it, Jimmy?—when he became a monk, and it haunted him his whole first year. You'd see him when he was peeling potatoes, putting his arm around the bucket and making irreligious motions with his feet."

There was a general laugh in which Lois joined.

"An old lady who comes here to Mass sent Kieth this ice-cream," whispered Jarvis under cover of the laugh, "because she'd heard you were coming. It's pretty good, isn't it?"

Lois felt the rims of her eyes growing suddenly red.

## IV

THEN half an hour later over in the chapel things suddenly went all wrong. It was several years since Lois had been at Benediction, and at first she was thrilled by the gleaming monstrance with its central spot of white, the air rich and heavy with incense, and the sun shining through the stained glass window of St. Francis Xavier overhead and falling in warm red tracery on the cassock of the man in front of her, but at the first notes of the *O Salutaris Hostia* a heavy weight seemed to descend upon her soul. Kieth was on her right and young Jarvis on her left, and she stole uneasy glances at both of them.

What's the matter with me? she thought impatiently.

She looked again. Was there a certain coldness in both their profiles, that she had not noticed before—a pallor about the mouth and a curious set expression in their eyes. She shivered slightly; they were like dead men.

She felt her soul recede suddenly from Kieth's. This was her brother—this, this unnatural person. She caught herself in the act of a little laugh.

"What is the matter with me?"

She passed her hand over her eyes and the weight increased. The incense sickened her, and a stray, ragged note from one of the tenors in the choir grated on her ear like the shriek of a slate pencil. She fidgeted, and raising her hand to her hair, touched her forehead, found moisture on it.

"It's hot in here, hot as the deuce."

Again she repressed a faint laugh and then in an instant the weight upon her heart suddenly diffused into cold fear.

. . . It was that candle on the altar. It was all wrong—wrong. Why didn't somebody see it? There was something *in* it. There was something coming out of it, taking form and shape above it.

She tried to fight down her rising panic, told herself it was the wick. If the wick wasn't straight candles did something—but they didn't do this! With incalculable rapidity a force was gathering within her, a tremendous, assimilative force, drawing from every sense, every corner of her brain, and as it surged up inside her she felt an enormous, terrified repulsion. She drew her arms in close to her side, away from Kieth and Jarvis.

Something in that candle . . . she was leaning forward—in another moment she felt she would go forward toward it—didn't anyone see it? . . . anyone?

"Ugh!"

She felt a space beside her and something told her that Jarvis had gasped and sat down very suddenly . . . then she was kneeling and as the flaming monstrance slowly left the altar in the hands of the priest, she heard a great rushing noise in her ears—the crash of the bells was like hammer blows . . . and then in a moment that seemed eternal a great torrent rolled over her heart—there was a shouting there and a lashing as of waves . . .

. . . She was calling, felt herself calling for Kieth, her lips mouthing the words that would not come:

"Kieth, Oh, my God! *Kieth!*"

Suddenly she became aware of a new presence, something external, in front of her, consummated and expressed in warm red tracery. Then she knew. It was the window of St. Francis Xavier. Her mind gripped at it, clung to it finally, and she felt herself calling again endlessly, impotently—Kieth—Kieth!

Then out of a great stillness came a voice:

"*Blessed be God.*"

With a gradual rumble sounded the response rolling heavily through the chapel—

"Blessed be God."

The words sang instantly in her heart; the incense lay mystically and sweetly peaceful upon the air, and *the candle on the altar went out.*

"Blessed be His Holy Name."

"Blessed be His Holy Name."

Everything blurred into a swinging mist. With a sound half gasp, half cry, she rocked on her feet and reeled backward into Kieth's suddenly outstretched arms.

V

"LIE still, child."

She closed her eyes again. She was on the grass outside, pillowed on Kieth's arm, and Regan was dabbing her head with a cold towel.

"I'm all right," she said quietly.

"I know, but just lie still a minute longer. It was too hot in there. Jarvis felt it, too."

She laughed as Regan again touched her gingerly with the towel.

"I'm all right," she repeated.

But though a warm peace was filling her mind and heart she felt oddly broken and chastened as if someone had held her stripped soul up and laughed.

VI

HALF an hour later she walked leaning on Kieth's arm down the long central path toward the gate.

"It's been such a short afternoon," he sighed, "and I'm so sorry you were sick, Lois."

"Kieth, I'm feeling fine now, really; I wish you wouldn't worry."

"Poor old child. I didn't realize that Benediction'd be a long service for you after your hot trip out here and all."

She laughed cheerfully.

"I guess the truth is I'm not much used to Benediction. Mass is the limit of my religious exertions."

She paused and then continued quickly:

"I don't want to shock you, Kieth, but I can't tell you how—how *inconvenient* being a Catholic is. It really doesn't seem to apply any more. As far as morals go, some of the wildest boys I know are Catholics. And the brightest boys—I mean the ones who think and read a lot, don't seem to believe in much of anything any more."

"Tell me about it. The bus won't be here for another half hour."

They sat down on a bench by the path.

"For instance, Gerald Carter, he's published a novel. He absolutely roars when people mention immortality. And then Howa—well, another man I've known well, lately, who was Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, says that no intelligent person can believe in Supernatural Christianity. He says Christ was a great socialist, though. Am I shocking you?"

She broke off suddenly.

Kieth smiled.

"You can't shock a monk. He's a professional shock absorber."

"Well," she continued, "that's about all. It seems so—so *narrow*. Church schools, for instance. There's more freedom about things that Catholic people can't see—like birth control."

Kieth winced, almost imperceptibly, but Lois saw it.

"Oh," she said quickly, "everybody talks about everything now."

"It's probably better that way."

"Oh, yes, much better. Well, that's all, Kieth. I just wanted to tell you why I'm a little—lukewarm, at present."

"I'm not shocked Lois. I understand better than you think. We all go through those times. But I know it'll come out all right, child. There's that gift of faith that we have, you and I, that'll carry us past the bad spots."

He rose as he spoke, and they started again down the path.

"I want you to pray for me sometimes, Lois. I think your prayers would be about what I need. Because we've come very close in these few hours, I think."

Her eyes were suddenly shining.

"Oh, we have, we have!" she cried. "I feel closer to you now than to anyone in the world."

He stopped suddenly and indicated the side of the path.

"We might—just a minute—"

It was a pieta, a life-size statue of

the Blessed Virgin set within a semicircle of rocks.

Feeling a little self-conscious, she dropped on her knees beside him and made an unsuccessful attempt at prayer.

She was only half through when he rose. He took her arm again.

"I wanted to thank Her for letting us have this day together," he said simply.

Lois felt a sudden lump in her throat, and she wanted to say something that would tell him how much it had meant to her, too. But she found no words.

"I'll always remember this," he continued, his voice trembling a little—"this summer day with you. It's been just what I expected. You're just what I expected, Lois."

"I'm awfully glad, Kieth."

"You see, when you were little they kept sending me snapshots of you, first as a baby and then as a child in socks playing on the beach with a pail and shovel, and then suddenly as a wistful little girl with wondering, pure eyes—and I used to build dreams about you. A man has to have something living to cling to. I think, Lois, it was your little white soul I tried to keep near me—even when life was at its loudest and every intellectual idea of God seemed the sheerest mockery, and desire and love and a million things came up to me and said, 'Look here at me! See, I'm Life. You're turning your back on it!' All the way through that shadow, Lois, I could always see your baby soul flitting on ahead of me, very frail and very clear and wonderful."

Lois was crying softly. They had reached the gate and she rested her elbow on it and dabbed furiously at her eyes.

"And then later, child, when you were sick I knelt all one night and asked God to spare you for me—for I knew I wanted more then; He had taught me to want more. I wanted to know you moved and breathed in the same world with me. I saw you growing up, that white innocence of yours changing to a flame and burning to give light to other weaker souls. And then I wanted some day to take your children on my knee and hear them call the crabbed old monk Uncle Kieth."

He seemed to be laughing now as he talked.

"Oh, Lois, Lois, I was asking God for more than I wanted—the letters you'd write me and the place I'd have at your table. I wanted an awful lot, Lois, dear."

"You've got me, Kieth," she sobbed, "you know it, say you know it. Oh, I'm acting like a baby, but I didn't think you'd be this way, and I—oh, Kieth—Kieth—"

He took her hand and patted it softly.

"Here's the bus. You'll come again, won't you?"

She put her hands on his cheeks, and drawing his head down, pressed her tear-wet face against his.

"Oh, Kieth, brother, some day I'll tell you something—"

He helped her in, saw her take down her handkerchief and smile bravely at him, as the driver flicked his whip and the bus rolled off. Then a thick cloud of dust rose around it and she was gone.

For a few minutes he stood there on the road, his hand on the gate-post, his lips half parted in a smile.

"Lois," he said aloud in a sort of wonder, "Lois, Lois."

Later, some probationers passing noticed him kneeling before the pieta, and coming back after a time found him still there. And he was there until twilight came down and the courteous trees grew garrulous overhead and the crickets took up their burden of song in the dusky grass.

## VII

The first clerk in the telegraph booth in the Baltimore Station whistled through his back teeth at the second clerk:

"S'matter?"

"See that girl—no, the pretty one with the big black dots on her veil.

Too late—she's gone. You missed somep'n."

"What about her?"

"Nothing. 'Cept she's damn good looking. Came in here yesterday and sent a wire to some guy to meet her somewhere. Then a minute ago she came in with a telegram all written out and was standin' there goin' to give it to me when she changed her mind or somep'n and all of a sudden tore it up."

"Hm."

The first clerk came around the counter and picking up the two pieces of paper from the floor put them together idly. The second clerk read them over his shoulder and subconsciously counted the words as he read. There were just thirteen.

*This is in the way of a permanent good-bye. I should suggest Italy.*

Lois.

"Tore it up, eh?" said the second clerk.

## SONG OF THE JEALOUS LOVER

By Harold Cook

MEN can weave a tapestry,
Green and crimson threads, and blue,
That shall be a cloak for thee,
Rich and new.

And they can build thee a high house
Secure, that will stay the rain,
Where you shall sit, a very flower
Of love and pain.

They can build, weave a new gown—
My song is old and soft and low,
But it can pull a high house down,
Then rise, and go.

A MAN ceases to be interesting to a woman when she learns that he is engaged—but he becomes interesting again when she learns that he is married.

EXPERIENCE in man is something bought with the tears of plain women and the kisses of pretty ones.

A CYNIC is not one who has loved and lost. He is one who has been loved and won.

# THE MID-VICTORIANS

By Edith Chapman

## I

THE room was lighted with soft, yellow candles. It was a goldish room, with here and there touches of blue and black. And Mrs. Faxon was, on the whole, a goldish person—with the same blue and black touches. Her gown was gold; her hair was a subtler gold; there were lovely, warm amber tones to her complexion; her eyes were so dark as to leave one uncertain whether they were black or whether they were blue.

There was, moreover, everything about her to suggest—in regard to the gold before alluded to—less its physical than its metaphysical values. She was small and expensive and precious. She was *de luxe*. All her elaborate appointments seemed inseparable from her, and extremely fitting. One could only see her in a half-light of large, rich rooms and expensive draperies. The lavish number of jewels she always wore was borne out by her general, though frail, magnificence . . . She existed purely as decoration—like her old French furniture and exotic gowns.

As Houghton stared at her he let her suggest to him those fragile, almost unreal, Oriental women whom he used to see in Egypt. Wasn't she, in the same way, made to be kept under glass? What could she *do*, for instance, with her little useless hands? They seemed scarcely large enough or strong enough to lift the tea things on the huge tea-tray in front of her; the heavy carved silver, the cargoes of cakes and sweets. She had such an excessive supply of this gaudy confectionery!

He wondered why she had invited him, at last. To be sure he had urged her often enough, but with more curiosity than hope. It wasn't as if he were urging her to any unusual course. He had learned that she liked, occasionally, to arrange these *tête-à-tête* teas. It was very pleasant to be here. He accepted his cup of tea from her and then drew his chair nearer.

She raised her eyes and gently smiled at him.

"It was good of you to come," she murmured. "I sometimes become so bored."

"It is because you have nothing to do. It must be tedious to have nothing to do."

She only smiled again. "It is."

He wondered rather vaguely whether he was supposed to make love to her. With women like Theo one never knew. To be sure she was Bruce Faxon's wife. Bruce Faxon, one of the most correct, the most orthodox, men in town. And even in her own right she was a Carton. On the other hand, her particular set was growing rather radical. It was the form their nervousness took.

He hitched his chair still nearer and let his fingers feel for hers. She didn't draw her hand away, but patted his softly. He had a very friendly feeling for her as he felt her little fingers waver in his. He let all his scruples go, or rather, call it his expedience.

Whatever it was on her part—ennui, nerves, the dread of seeming puritanical—there was nothing to prevent his profiting by it, at least to the extent of a slight pressure or two of those confiding fingers. But what further overtures he may have intended were rudely

interrupted by the sound of the front door opening.

Theo perceptibly paled. "My husband. But he never comes home at this time. How abominably awkward!"

Houghton felt awkward enough. What had he been let in for? What was her game? By the time Faxon appeared in the doorway he was thoroughly angry.

"No tea for me, Theo," the other man was saying, and then, as he took in the situation: "Oh, I say, Houghton, I didn't see you at first. It's this infernally dim light my wife insists on. Calls it artistic. For my part, I like to be able to see the various objects of my environment, not to mention the people. How are you, old chap? I'm only in for a change of clothes. You won't mind my rushing? . . . Remember, dear, I'm dining out to-night. I wish I could stop to tea."

As Faxon's step grew fainter on the staircase Houghton stiffly rose. "I'm sorry if I've done anything awkward. I'm as sorry for myself as for you. Bruce is an awfully fine fellow. I wonder if you realize how lucky you are."

Theo lazily reflected on his temerity to stand there moralizing to her. What Pharisees men were! What prigs! Even the worst of them. For Houghton was one of the worst; a regular dog in the manger. An utter hypocrite! Why had she thought, for a moment, that she liked him? How affected his voice was; how silly and pompous he looked.

"Perhaps you'd better go," she suggested, and she didn't trouble to give him her hand.

## II

She waited for her husband to come downstairs. There was sure to be a scene. He was so punctilious about some things. She sat quite still, expecting him. And soon she was rewarded by the sound of his step. However, he hurried past the drawing-room door. "Good-bye, dear; I'm in a frightful rush, and I shall probably be late getting back. Don't sit up for me."

As the outer door closed, she settled back a trifle disappointedly. She hated postponing things. Of course his *sang froid* only meant that he was angry. Angrier, probably, than he had ever been before. And he was going to keep her in suspense a good while before he came down on her. How tiresome! She hated suspense. She would much prefer to go through with it at once. And get it over with.

But perhaps she wasn't going to get through with it for some time. Bruce was such an inscrutable person. She had never pretended to understand him. To be sure he had always given her a great deal of liberty, but this precise sort of situation had never occurred before. He had never caught her in such an embarrassing position. And she had always heard that men who seemed the most tolerant were those who, in crises, behaved the worst. What if he were seriously angry with her? He might even intend to send her away.

She rose nervously, and, going over to her little writing-table, sat down and leaned her head on her hands. Perhaps she had better go away of her own accord while she still had the time. Perhaps she had better write him a little note and then leave that very day. . . . But no, she couldn't. She loved him too much; she loved her home; she was utterly dependent on it and on him. She would wait. He couldn't be going to do anything so absurd. Just because she had let a man come and take tea with her. And hold her hand.

It was all so ridiculous. And Houghton, of all people. But how could Bruce be sure what Houghton had come for? He may have thought that Houghton was in the habit of coming. He had found them alone, apparently by appointment, at an hour when he was supposed to be safely out of the way. The very fact of his having taken it so casually proved the degree to which he had been upset. It was always in moments of highest tension that he became the most contained, the most inscrutable.

Not for worlds would he have let Houghton see that he had been taken by surprise!

She sighed; she wished that she knew her husband better. In the three years of their married life she had never really known him. His manner to her had always been the same: impeccable, but aloof. Beneath it all she felt that he was fond of her, immensely fond of her. But he held her so utterly off from him. She didn't apparently figure for him, outside a very limited sphere. And he didn't intend that she should. She knew nothing of his life; he inquired nothing of hers. It was this aloofness of his which fascinated her most, and which at the same time drove her to seek for interests outside.

However, she had never meant to be too aberrant. There seemed to be certain things he expected of her, for all his indulgence. And she had never contemplated defying him. She had never cared to invite his contempt; that supercilious, careless, but possibly dynamic disapproval which she had felt latent in him from time to time. There was something authoritative about his very reserve. She knew that he might judge very severely what he would consider a lapse of taste.

She wished he would come *and get it over with.* Blow her up, punish her in whatever way he intended.

The worst of it was that she couldn't conceive of him as blowing her up. He wouldn't do anything so literal or so crude. However he showed his anger, it wouldn't be in that futile, explosive manner.

The longer she brooded the more she cursed herself for her folly. What was there about her, unstable, temperamental, that let her take such risks? Why couldn't she sit tight on her good fortune? There wasn't another such man as Bruce Faxon. Intelligent, worldly, distinguished; a man whose mere silent presence in a room gave to the whole gathering a note of breeding and force. He gave her the only distinction she possessed. For innumerable other women were as pretty and as rich. Most of her friends, for instance, whose manœuvres she had only been aping, after all.

What had she to gain by copying such examples as Sally Lerch and Mida Fleming? She knew how Bruce regarded all this set. As utterly illiterate and vulgar. All their cheap experimenting he considered merely so much nervous waste. Unless one could act intelligently one had better not act at all. "To go off half-cocked," as he called it, was the most disagreeable proof of puerility; that lack of any power to reason or correlate which, in an adult human being, was the least he required. He was as squeamish of anything extravagant as she was of the philistine or prosaic. . . . He wouldn't easily forgive her.

And then, suddenly, she paused. Might it not be that really to anger him would be one method of breaking past his defences, forcing a way through his reserve. Whatever the compass of his resentment, it might at least light up for her those chambers of his personality which he wasn't accustomed to reveal.

Perhaps the unlucky affair had about it something fortuitous after all. Her husband intrigued her more than she liked to confess, even to herself. She had in respect to him—had always had—a tremendous curiosity.

She began to look forward to the reckoning with a not entirely unpleasant anticipation.

He had told her not to wait up for him, but she would wait up.

She felt very like a heroine in a play.

## III

For all her resolution, on that particular evening, no accounting took place. It was as it had always been. Before his bland, impervious manner her resolutions went down as leaves before the wind.

He came in shortly before one, and, finding her still up, evinced great concern. He cut short all her remarks and sent her to bed. That was all that could be said for it. The affectionate courtesy of his tone scantily concealed that authority which, though he appeared

never to be exerting it, was as positive a feature of him as the ring of his voice or the clear cold blue of his eyes. There was that about him which left one without the power to disobey. It was a personal forcefulness, a superior strength, rather than any wilfully exerted control. Theo always wondered why she submitted to him so tamely; and she went on submitting.

The next day the same story was repeated. She rose early, an unwonted feat for her. She hoped that the shock of her unexpected appearance at the breakfast table would shatter his reserve. But nothing of the sort occurred. He was as friendly, and as noncommittal, as ever.

During the day her dread increased to the diminishment of her anticipation. He must be very angry after all. The deeper waters ran, the more one had to fear from them, she had been told. She was afraid of his self-control. Her own impulsiveness lent it all the terror of an unknown quantity.

She couldn't stand the suspense any longer. After dinner she would pluck up her courage and force an issue.

She arranged that they should dine at home, and alone. During dinner his cordial manner showed no abatement. She laid it to the fact that the servants were present.

When they were finally back in the drawing-room she turned a flood of light into the usually dim place and then stationed herself in front of him.

"What are you going to do?"

As he took it all in—the brightly-lit room, her theatrical pose, the extraordinary tension of her manner, and her forced, anxious smile—a shade of distaste crossed his face.

"What am I going to do?" he murmured. "I'm going to light a cigarette. Won't you have one?"

Then, as she still continued to stand didactically in front of him:

"Hadn't you better sit down?"

She turned away with a quivering chin and sat down listlessly in one of the large chairs, which straightway blotted out her delicate figure with its heavy upholstered lines. The only salient spot against the hard blue back was her golden hair.

"Bruce," she pleaded, "don't torture me. Tell me what you are going to do."

He sat down near her and gently inhaled his cigarette.

"Really, Theo, you must believe I am utterly sincere when I tell you I haven't an idea what you are talking about. What am I going to do about what?"

She propped her head on her hand and stared at him.

"I can't make you out. Won't you take pity on my crudeness and be quite frank with me, for once? Tell me what you are thinking. About yesterday afternoon, I mean. You were very much vexed that I let Jack Houghton come here for tea. Isn't it so?"

He laughed his quiet, suppressed laugh.

"I haven't thought anything about it one way or the other. It seemed to me entirely your affair."

"Then you didn't mind?"

"Mind? Why no. Why *should* I have minded? *I* didn't have to entertain him."

Still her incredulous senses couldn't accept this statement.

"Are you mocking me?"

He glanced at her directly for the first time.

"Theo, you're carrying your unwholesome reading too far, I'm afraid. You're allowing it to make you fatuous. . . . Please, please, dear, don't go in for that pseudo-analysis that your friends are so addicted to."

"Why is it pseudo?" was all she found to say, at the moment.

"Because their technique is so elementary. Their only tests are the stock formulas they find in the books they read. And they read such silly books."

"What do you mean?" She almost sobbed it out. He bewildered her so.

"I mean that you're straining very hard to manufacture an 'interesting situation.' Just as you did yesterday afternoon. Until to-night you've never tried to include me in this sort of experiment-

ing. Please be charitable and don't begin."

She felt a faint scarlet creeping over her face. "I don't more than half understand you."

"No, it isn't that. You don't understand yourself because you don't want to understand. You'd do anything, even take some risks, I imagine, not to appear to yourself what you unquestionably are."

She left her chair abruptly and came over to kneel on a low one beside his. "Which is?"

"Conventional, and cautious."

Her lips parted; her straining, pained eyes never left his face.

She listened to him with a tense, almost a childlike attention.

"Conventional?" she whispered.

"Aren't you? Aren't you actually uncomfortable sometimes in the rather bizarre situations you let yourself in for?"

"Situations?" She seemed able only to echo him.

"Why, yes. Because yesterday wasn't the first. Was it?"

"First what?"

"Attempt of that sort. Adventure, flirtation, whatever you like to call it. You've been tinkering with that kind of thing for some time."

"You have known." Her lips barely breathed the words. For almost the first time in years her tone was simple and sincere.

"My dear Theo, I have known—*you*. An incurable romantic. What did you take me for? A fool?"

She hardly heard him. He had known! The other little secret teas and dinners, the furtive hand pressures, the one or two equivocal kisses, all her little tawdry attempts to eke out a glamour for her life—all this he had known. "And you didn't care?"

"No. I haven't cared."

"That means, I suppose, you haven't loved me." Her voice trailed off; her head went down on her hands.

He patted her bright hair. "On the contrary, I love you very much. Why should you think I don't?"

Her next words came muffled from the shelter of her arms.

"You can say you love me, and yet not mind my flirting with other men."

"That shows the kind of books you've been reading." He tried to raise her head, but for once she resisted him. "How can this play-flirting of yours affect you in your relation to me? You're none the less charming, amiable —*domestic*." He laughed at her exclamation of horror. "You see, there's the crux of the whole matter. I have perfect confidence in your fundamental domesticity. I know you so well. Know you as, at bottom, what you are most afraid of being—an adorable philistine."

"I'm not, oh, I'm not," she asserted between her sobs.

"Yes, you are, and a sentimentalist. But I can easily forgive you both these things. I can relish them, in fact. They are part of your charm. What I couldn't forgive as readily would be certain qualities which are usually considered virtues. Too much independence, too much intelligence. Or—ugliness. Now you see—how unheroic I am, how reactionary, how mid-Victorian?"

He put out his cigarette and lifted her into his arms. "Entertain as many Houghtons as you like, my dear, provided that you reserve me your evenings."

She stared up at him with wide, tearful eyes in which the shrunken image of herself loomed large; but with all the while that clinging of her hands and yielding of her body which she had learned pleased him.

Good-humouredly he bent and kissed her tear-stained, lovely face. "Let's forget all this. What do the Houghtons matter? After all you belong to me."

# A POEM IN PROSE

By Dennison Varr

TWO men set out together. One chose to amass wealth, the other to write poetry. At the end of twenty years the first had raised a million and a pretty daughter. The second had seventy sonnets to his credit.

One day they met.

"What can your poetry bring you?" asked the first. "My money will get me anything."

But the first man's daughter read the poetry of the second, became enamoured of him and secretly married him. Shortly afterwards, the first man died of gout, leaving all his wealth to his daughter. The poet took charge of the cheque book, built a costly mausoleum for the dead man and wrote a charming epitaph for him.

# QUIET DAYS

By Muna Lee

QUIET evenings when you are here,
Long days that we are apart,
The thought of you clings close and dear
As ivy to my heart.

Yet I go silent through my days,
Lest speech should do you wrong.
You are too close to me for praise,
You are too near for song.

WHEN a woman becomes vivacious and gay, there is some man to thank. When a man becomes moody and morose, there is some woman to thank.

HAPPY is the man who abhors blondes, loathes brunettes, and can't bear red-headed women.

# THE HOPE CHEST

## By L. M. Hussey

SHE answered "yes"; the word floating from her full lips upon an ecstasy of slowly expressed breath. This was the reality of a fervently dreamed instant.

Her thrilling sense of victory and her appreciation of achievement were so engrossing that she gave no more than a passive response to his kisses that now followed her affirmative. She felt the touch of his lips, she was conscious of the circle of his enclosing arms, yet her supreme emotion was not physical; his kisses were only the contenting accompaniment of her mental exaltation.

She had striven arduously for this moment, intrigued him with every little trick she could command, endlessly endeavoured to make herself glamorous and lend a mystery to even her most intimate instants. At last it had sufficed to capture him and soon she would be married.

Realizing that her abstraction was beginning to surprise him, she put aside, for the time, her absorbing contemplation of victorious fulfilment and talked to him again.

"I'm so proud of you," she whispered. "We'll be wonderfully happy together."

He pressed her plump hands.

"Of course," he responded. "I know we will. You're the dearest—"

His caressing words were almost lost to her in a new delight she had, observing the eagerness in his young eyes. She experienced an embracing warmth in this knowledge of being desired. There was no flaw to these moments; each second fully measured as she had dreamed it.

He looked very young to her then; but that did not matter. A few months before, when he had made his initial visits to her home, she had felt a certain shrinking, a peculiar uncertainty about his youth—he was obviously younger than herself. In a way it had not been easy to build up hopes upon so young a man. She had found difficulty in arousing enough of her own confidence—the confidence for a determined attack. But he was persistent. He called on her repeatedly. His visits took on a significance.

Looking at his face now, she enjoyed the candour of his brown eyes, the unlined forehead above, the thick mass of rather long dark hair that he combed straight back. She could be proud of him; he was fully adequate to exhibit for the envy of her friends.

His youth gave a profound tenderness to her emotions; with an almost grateful gesture she raised her hands and pressed her palms against his cheeks.

"Why did you wait so long?" she exclaimed. "Why didn't we know about our love for each other before?"

He smiled.

"We have all our life," he assured her.

"Yes, but I want you *now;* I want to see you every day—and to-morrow you have to go away."

"Only a month," he reminded her.

"A month!" Her voice was reproachful. "A month to wait after this wonderful evening; a whole month to wait until I'll see you again—and hear you say all those sweet things again."

"I'll write them to you every day!"

She withdrew her hands; she turned

half around on the sofa, away from him, pretending a sudden anger.

"I'm mad at you!" she exclaimed, but her voice was coloured with an endearing inflection.

She felt his arms around her again.

"Don't say that! Why do you say that?"

"Because you're going to let nasty *business* separate us *now!*"

He pressed close to her.

"So that I can make money for you and me," he whispered.

She found these words delightful, and she turned to him again with a radiant smile.

They began to talk of their future, planned how they would live, how their hours would pass, all the delight they would find in each other.

It was much later than usual when he arose to go, and the parting, especially because of the separation impending, was difficult to achieve.

When the door was closed at last, she pressed her face against the glass panel, watching him go down the steps, following him with her happy eyes until he had disappeared entirely. With a deep sigh she turned back into the hall and after a second's hesitation began to mount the stairs.

She went directly to her room.

Turning on the light, she stood just inside the door, her eyes half closed, her hands crossed and pressed against her breast. She enjoyed the warm languour that seemed to enclose her then, as with a magic mantle. Her sensation was of one who stops at last to rest, after the accomplishment of a task difficult and long. Entirely motionless within her room, she let this feeling of sublimated success pass over her whole body, as if it were a subtle substance, pulsing with each heart-beat in her blood.

Then, as she widened her eyes at last, they encountered a familiar rectangular box, drawn up close to the pendant covers of her small bed.

It was a significant sight; a symbol. Her hope chest! She smiled eagerly, and running across the room, raised the lid. The breath of air that rose up was perfumed, and the garments within, meticulously laid one upon another, had never before filled her eyes with such a precious aspect.

Almost reverently she stooped and took up a little chemise in the tips of her fingers. It was the last offering she had made to the chest—and it surprised her when she realized how long that had been. More than a month before the first meeting with Fred!

A pink ribbon of the silk chemise curled about her fingers; she held the soft garment idly as her mind went back in retrospection.

It was startling how much her hopes, during the past year, had dwindled. So long a time since she had placed any of these pretty things in the little perfumed box!

She recalled the early days of her hope chest—the accumulation of its store had begun five years back. There followed an eager several years when she had almost religiously added to its treasures. Then it had seemed more easy to capture a man . . .

And now she had Fred . . . !

He came to her at the ebb of her dreams, during days of sustained depression. And now, remembering her past disappointments, she was not without her wonder at his coming. In a vague way she felt grateful, grateful to her destiny, to her fortunes, to some obscure, higher power. . . .

Closing the lid of her hope chest, she began to disrobe slowly. She crossed the room, and standing in front of a narrow, full-length mirror, set in the panel of the closet door, she regarded herself indulgently.

During the past five years she had been growing quite plump. She noticed that her cheeks were entirely round, her chin curved with a slight billow, her arms somewhat heavy above the elbows.

She smiled complacently, recalling how this rounding of her figure had formerly brought her apprehensions. Many men preferred women of her type. Fred was undoubtedly one of this sort.

## II

THERE was a very affectionate parting and then her lover started on his trip West. Her eyes were moist as she watched him through the gate and saw him finally enter the Pullman. Afterward the depression of these parting moments lifted.

Her future was full of prospects. She no longer felt envious of women whom she met on the street when they passed with their men. Now she experienced a certain unconfessed comradery with these women who had secured their men—but not entirely an equality. She entertained a comforting apprehension of her superior fortune. She was proud of Fred. He was younger, he was better looking, he was more ardent than other women's men.

His letters arrived every day and they were read again and again; repeating his endearing terms aloud, in a soft voice, she imagined his own lips saying them, she saw his face close to her own murmuring these sweet phrases, and she thrilled with an intimate delight. Like sacramental tokens the letters were each laid in a scented box, where the little pile gradually grew up taller, an augmenting testimony of his affection. Every day she answered him faithfully.

After the passage of several weeks it developed that his stay in the West would be somewhat longer than they had anticipated—a month longer, perhaps. She was naturally disappointed, but the further wait did not depress her.

In a measure she would regret the passing of these expectant days, however desired might be the culmination of her plans. There was a delicate tremulousness to these hours, a sweetness of expectancy, that made them precious. She knew she would always remember the month or two of waiting, with no one to think of but him, and long, warm hours to dream!

Now he began to speak of being very busy; his letters grew shorter. This did not disturb her at first, inasmuch as it was a proof of his eagerness to return. Nevertheless, in a few days she began to find a distinct dissatisfaction in his brief notes and in the increasingly perfunctory manner in which he wrote them.

One day there was no letter at all.

This aroused her fears, but the following day a long and satisfying communication arrived, charged with affection, almost extravagant with sweet phrases, and telling of the efforts he was making to complete his work and come back to her. She blamed herself for her fears, for her hazy suspicions, for her day of disturbing doubts. They were not worthy of him.

His notes grew shorter again; two days passed without any word from him at all; there followed another letter of exuberant affection.

And then he did not write for a week.

After the second day she began to telegraph; she wrote frantically two or three times each day; put special delivery stamps on her square, pink envelopes. No appeal brought any response.

Meanwhile, her logical fears assailed her like demons; they came in legions, until no conquering force of her assurance was sufficient to oppose their numberless despairs. All her past experiences, her dozen disappointments, came vividly into her mind, filling her with acute forebodings.

At last his letter came.

She read it, her face paled a little, her hands dropped in her lap and the note fluttered to the floor.

"Forgive me," he told her. "I didn't realize that age made any difference. But now I find that you're older than I, and it seems to me we'd never be happy. I've tried to keep my word and to keep out of my mind someone that I happened to meet just by an accident here. But now I find she and I are meant for each other. I will always admire you—a woman like you can always find a good man. . . ."

## III

It surprised her after a time to discover how few tears she had shed upon the knowledge of her disaster. Her reaction was more one of numbness and bitterness, not an acute grief. It seemed to her that against her fortunes there was directed an almost personal malevolence that revealed itself in the persistent shattering of her dreams. Some sardonic opposition loomed up in life, invisible but potent—almost the symbol of life itself. There were long hours when she hated to live, when she hated life and every gesture of the living.

Again she felt immensely alone; there was no prospect, nor any visions. Once or twice, when her eyes encountered the hope chest, a surge of passionate anger mounted upward through her body; the sight was hateful to her and she always turned away in haste.

But gradually her emotions became more subdued and moments of unexpectedly comforting thoughts brought her a new poise.

The adventure with Fred had not culminated in a total disaster. To a certain degree he must have loved her. She had lost him in a way that any woman might lose a man—through absence, through inability to intrigue him with her calculated charm: this should not cause her shame.

However, she was surprised to find fresh hopes coming up into her mind, giving little, fluttering significances to certain moments and dreams when she lay in bed at night. If she had found Fred—and lost him by so little fault of her own—it might be that she was becoming more desirable to men; there were other Freds in the world!

One evening, with nothing before her until bedtime, she had decided on a couple of hours at the moving pictures.

She went to the nearest picture theatre and was soon interested in a sentimental screen drama that alternately brought moisture to her eyes, made her laugh and filled her full of soft wishings. She was seated near the aisle; there was an empty chair beside her.

The picture was a little more than half completed when someone pushed in to occupy the seat at her side. She stood up with some irritation; it was not until she resumed her chair again that a side-long glance revealed the newcomer as a young man.

At once the picture no longer absorbed her; there were more important realities. Her glance had been reciprocated and her eyes met his, slightly chatoyant in the darkness.

She turned her head quickly and fastened her gaze upon the screen, seeing nothing. She felt that his eyes were searching her face; in another second she looked at him again.

Once more their glances met. This time he smiled. He leaned toward her and his coat sleeve brushed lightly against her arm.

"Good evening," he murmured. "I'm glad to find you here. . . ."

She felt her cheeks flushing. She giggled a little.

"What's the use of pretending that you know me?" she asked.

"Don't let's pretend then," he answered at once. "Let's suppose we've just met each other."

"I don't know that I'll like you . . ."

"Well, give me a trial!"

He leaned closer, resting his elbow on the chair arm.

He turned half around and gave his head an intimate inclination.

"Tell me what the picture's all about?" he asked.

These words put her at ease and gave a ready opening for conversation.

She began to relate the plot of the drama, in so far as it had been divulged from the screen. All the time her heart beat faster, her cheeks felt warmer and she was conscious of a stirring delight. It was almost as if some unspoken prayer of hers had been answered; this one had come so quickly!

Like a voyager on a magic carpet, her florid imagination leapt into the future, conceiving the most sweetly intimate consequences of this sudden encounter. It did not matter that his name was still unknown, that his fea-

tures were still dim and uncertain, that none of the circumstances of his life had been revealed. She felt an entire assurance; he liked her or he would never have spoken.

She affected an immense naïveté and sweetness; her voice was low and full of musical modulations.

When the picture was completed they both stood up to go; she slipped her arm through the crook of his own, with a naïve trustfulness. As they emerged to the street, and the glare of the outer lights fell over them, they turned to each other in curiosity. In this instant of first, adequate scrutiny, she found no lessening of her pleasure.

In a way, he reminded her of Fred—the memory of Fred brought no bitter thoughts. Although the configuration of his features was naturally different, there was a reminiscence of Fred in the colour of his eyes, the thick, dark hair, and a certain boyish carriage of his head. Like Fred, he was young.

They had only a short distance to walk to her apartment. Her father, a silent, self-effacive old man, was already in bed, and the sibilant sound of his respiration hissed softly in the apartment like the escape of gas from an unlighted jet.

She took the young man into the living room; two windows and a door with glass panels opened out upon the small porch, and the light of an arc lamp streamed in through these transparencies, giving to the room a subdued glow. She did not turn on the light.

"Don't you think it's nicer this way?" she asked.

Without waiting for his confirming assent, she seated herself on a couch, pushed close against the side wall.

In another instant he joined her; they turned toward each other, they both smiled; he put out his hand and his fingers closed over her own.

She did not resist. She allowed him to draw her closer; he kissed her and she returned with her own the pressure of his lips.

For more than an hour they sat together, saying very little, and exchanging these caresses. Occasionally she stroked his hair with her plump hands, smoothed his cheeks and smiled close to his face.

She was deeply content, almost languid, in the calm of one who had passed from the turbulency of severe pain to a nirvana of ease. She was wholly assured; she felt that she could give him all his desire, in the warmth of her affection and the persistence of her possible love.

When he rose to go at last it seemed to her that she was parting from an old companion, a lover of many years. The utmost intimacy had come to these two since the moment of their recent meeting.

"You'll be *sure* and come to-morrow evening?" she asked.

He hesitated an instant.

She threw back her head and offered her lips.

"Yes . . ." he consented.

They embraced again at the door and she watched him go out into the night.

Turning back into the hall, she walked slowly to her room. The moon had come up and it lighted the little chamber with a glow of magic suggestion. A straight beam fell over the hope chest, enclosing it in a luminescent aura.

She smiled in delighted languour and faint little thrills ran up and down her back. With her lips still curved in the content and promise of this hour, she slowly prepared for bed.

## IV

THE next day passed delightfully in hours of anticipation. Her curiosity had asserted itself; she realized how little she knew about her new friend; there were so many interesting details to learn!

This evening, she knew, they would talk more, and in the exchange of their confidences grow closer to each other. Now and then she marvelled at the swiftness of her happy fortune.

After dinner she dressed carefully, putting on a frock that she believed

subdued her plumpness a little. She waited for him in the living room.

At eight o'clock he had not come. Going to the porch she looked up and down the street in a faint anxiety.

Returning then to the room, she endeavoured to interest herself in a magazine story, but put the book down at last, unable to concentrate on the author's tale. She got up and walked around the room.

It was half-past eight.

By nine-thirty she gave up her last hope.

Nevertheless, a week passed before she admitted the full devastation of the fact. He was never coming back again! She waited for him every evening, and each night, disappointed, tearful, she went to bed with a deeper and deeper depression.

A week of this and she could not fail to understand. He had amused himself with her for an evening, he had lied about coming again, and he had gone out with never a purpose of returning to her.

Her bitterness came back and it showed itself in her face, hardened the lines of her full lips, twitched her nostrils to a faint, ascetic curve, and coloured even the quality of her voice. She felt that she hated all men; yet she knew inwardly her immeasurable desire for one!

Several weeks later, as she was sitting at breakfast with her father, she was surprised to observe him smiling at her with a peculiarly significant grin.

She scowled a little and questioned him:

"What's the matter with you?"

"Listen," he said. "I want you to get up a *very* nice little dinner to-night, I'm bringing somebody here. . . ."

He grinned again, mysteriously.

"Old sport," he went on. "Good old boy. Widower. Lots of money. *Your* chance, girlie!"

He arose and walked slowly out of the room, pausing to take his hat from the rack in the hall. She could hear him chuckling over his idea as he went down the stairs. Taking up the dishes from the table, she frowned in resentment. But after a time she became more curious; she wondered whom her father was bringing home; perhaps what he said was true. An old widower . . . lots of money . . . she smiled a little.

There might be some amusement. . . .

Later in the day her interest increased and her thoughts grew more serious.

After all, it was somewhat plain that young men did not appreciate her; they lacked the experience to estimate her worth, to foresee her capability of devotion, to comprehend the steadfastness of her affection. An older man, knowing some of the disillusionment of having lived, could appreciate her.

She paused in the work of the moment, looked down at the floor a second and then, elevating her shoulders, she sighed. An older man! Even for her, that would be a lesson in disillusionment.

Nevertheless, she followed her father's suggestion—she prepared an excellent dinner. She was in the kitchen when she heard her father coming up the stairs to the apartment, the murmur of a strange voice sounding with his own.

She ran hurriedly to her room, looked in the mirror, tucked up some flying wisps of hair, powdered her nose and cheeks, and then reappeared slowly with a smile on her face. She stepped into the living room and found her father and his friend together. They both stood up.

"Hallowell, my daughter," said her father.

They shook hands.

She was not disappointed. She had steeled herself to meet an even older man—he was not so bad! His hair was quite grey, but his face was ruddy, the complexion looked fresh, his smile was agreeable and she liked his authoritative air. He pressed her hand intimately.

"The old sport here has told me a book full about you," he said.

She laughed.

"Don't believe him!" she exclaimed.

They chatted a few further seconds and then, excusing herself, she ran off to the kitchen to take up the matter of the dinner. A moment later her father appeared and began to mix cocktails. He also produced a bottle of Madeira. The cork was withdrawn with a pleasant pop.

"We'll have this after the cocktails," he said. "The old boy is very fond of wine."

"Why haven't you had him here before?" she asked.

"Haven't seen him for ten years," he explained. "Just turned up in these parts last week. You'll like him."

They called their guest and dinner began.

After a short time the wine was poured and everyone found it very agreeable. Hallowell developed considerable wit and told two or three amusing stories. At first, however, the conversation was mainly carried on by the two men, who were in a reminiscent mood. Later the visitor seemed more attracted to the girl; he began to smile at her; they found themselves laughing at each other's words. A fresh bottle of wine appeared.

It came to her suddenly that Hallowell's eye had a new glisten; his face was flushed; the wine was affecting him.

She glanced at her father; he had not spoken for some minutes and now she observed his head nodding. His cigar hung limply between his two fingers and she knew he would presently be sound asleep.

Hallowell followed her eyes, and then, their glances meeting, they smiled at each other significantly. The visitor stood up, and coming around the table, sat down in a chair at her side.

With an eager light in her eyes, she poured him a fresh glass of wine. He held up the glass to her and she took a sip, whereat he drained it.

"Poor father has fallen by the wayside, hasn't he?" she asked.

Hallowell laughed rather foolishly and made a gesture to touch her; she drew back and his hand fell short, just brushed her dress, and dropped to his knees. She arose quickly and beckoned to him.

"Let's go in the front room," she said, "where we won't disturb him."

He followed her, a little unsteadily, and in the living room they sat down together on the couch.

For a few moments they were silent; she was the first to speak.

"It's too bad we never met before," she said.

"Had no idea there was anything like you at home," he said. "I'd have been here years ago."

She laughed softly.

"You seem terribly fond of the girls!"

"Fond of the right one."

She began to question him, flatter him with her interest, to encourage his confidences.

After a time, running out for a moment, she returned with two fresh glasses of wine. They drank each other's health. Old Hallowell drew closer to her.

He put out his arm, circled her shoulder and endeavoured to kiss her. She pushed him away.

"What's th' matter?" he inquired, elevating his white eyebrows in surprise.

"Don't do that!"

"Why? Can' we be friends?"

"Yes, but I don't want you to do that."

"'Fraid of me?"

"No, indeed."

"Don't like me?"

"Certainly I like you!"

He leaned forward again.

"Just a little—"

She pulled away.

"No, no! Be nice now!"

"Why not?"

She dropped her eyes demurely.

"Well," she said, "it isn't right. It isn't fair. I want to save all that for the man I'll marry sometime."

He blinked at her steadily for several seconds. A significant smile spread over his features.

"Not got 'im picked out yet, have

you?" he asked. "I'm a pretty good old boy. What do you think of me?"

She regarded him seriously, but inwardly her elated heart beat faster and her cheeks coloured slowly with the emotion of impending success.

"What do you mean?" she inquired, voicing her question softly.

"Wha's the matter with me?" he asked. "Won't I do? I just *want* a littl' thing like you!"

She straightened, and fastening her eyes upon his face, spoke to him gravely.

"Do you mean that you want to *marry* me?"

"Certainly!"

This time she let him enclose her in his arms and she received a clumsy kiss.

She had some difficulty in extricating herself from his eager embraces, but it was necessary to confirm her victory.

She questioned him again, she made him repeat his proposal in several ways —and she gave him her consent. After this she suffered his further caresses.

Later in the evening she helped him out into the hall, found his hat, steadied him down the stairs, and at the door eluded his ineffectual attempt to kiss her good-night.

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed, laughing.

He turned away and she saw him descend to the pavement.

Running upstairs, she turned out the light in the dining room, where her father was still sleeping. Then she went directly to her room. She was very sleepy herself; the wine was affecting her like an opiate.

She lay down on her bed, and without undressing fell into a dreamless slumber.

## V

She awoke late the next morning. Her head ached a little, her senses were heavy and she felt horribly mussed.

For some minutes she did not recall the happenings of the previous night. Then, pausing in her toilet, she looked thoughtfully at the floor. At last she was going to be married! No thrill of delight came to her, although there was a satisfaction in the thought. He was an old man—she had had dreams of another sort! She sighed. Then, a smile appearing, her activity returned. It was a compromise—but at least she had a man!

It was noon when the débris of the past evening was cleared away. She dressed then and went out to do some shopping. Now she was wondering whether he would come that evening. Had her father seen him to-day? Had he confessed anything? How would he greet her when he came?

Her interest increased and her faint shrinking disappeared. Moreover, a certain thought comforted her. She knew the ways of young men; it was better, after all, to have an older one. They were less flighty, more reliable: Hallowell was old enough to appreciate a woman of her character.

The afternoon was half spent when she returned to the apartment.

Pausing at the door, she ran her hand into the small mail box and found a letter. It was addressed to her, in a strange hand. She took it upstairs with her and laid it on her dressing-table to be read after she had dressed for the evening.

Presently, however, her curiosity made her take up the envelope and open it. She read the letter word for word and then, ripping it angrily in two pieces, she dropped the torn sheets to the floor. It was from Hallowell, and he had mailed it early that morning.

"I hope you'll forget all the foolishness of last night," he said. "I had too much of that good wine. Accept my sincerest apologies. I hope to see you again some time before I go away from this city. Give my best regards to your father."

Turning slowly, staring downward, her eyes encountered the small, rectangular hope chest. Her cheeks flushed and her anger flared intensely. What a ridiculous object it was! A hope

chest! A lot of good clothes that she never wore!

With a determined step she crossed the room and raised the lid. Deliberately selecting the little chemise that lay on top, she pulled off the garment she was wearing and slipped the chemise over her shoulders. She tightened the pink ribbons with angry jerks. It seemed to her that some immeasurable absurdity had kept these clothes from legitimate use.

Turning to the mirror she saw her reflected image, with the ribbons of the little chemise dangling on her bosom, and the shoulder frills touching her plump white arms. A sudden surprise assailed her. She stared earnestly at the mirrored garment. This was one of the little pieces from her *hope chest!*

Her mouth dropped open a little, her eyelids fell, and a dizzy wheel seemed to turn her head in distracting revolutions. She stepped back from the mirror. Some enormity had been committed. She had desecrated the hope chest; she was wearing the pretty symbols treasured there!

Then she understood and the full measure of her despair rushed upon her like an inundating wave. She knew the folly of any more hope, of any further saving, in a scented little box, toward the hour of her dreams' fulfilment. Her sobs broke the stillness of the room, her tears overflowed her eyes, and in a spasm of passionate weeping she threw herself upon the bed.

The lid of the hope chest remained open, forlornly abandoned.

# INTERPRETATION

## By Luis Muñoz Marin

THESE are singing things:
The stars,
The sea,
Lovers. . . .

These are silent things:
The night,
The sands,
Love. . . .

A MAN likes to think that, when he marries, all his old sweethearts will be heartbroken. Instead, they will probably be too busy pitying the bride.

A WOMAN can forgive God anything save a shiny nose.

# TRUTH

## By C. R. Corbin

THE funeral was gorgeous, befitting a world-famous scientist. There were twelve honorary pallbearers and five carloads of flowers. The newspapers devoted many columns of eulogy to the great man who had given his life that others might live. The doctors said he was the victim of death-dealing germs with which he was battling in his laboratory.

The doctors lied.

He caught pneumonia while prostrate on the floor in his pyjamas, trying to hear the quarrel in the flat below.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

## By Luis Muñoz Marin

FOR the stars,
For the wind, for the flowers, for the sea,
For people,
For all things below the stars,
All praise be to God.

For the fact that all these are good to me,
All praise be to you.

WOMEN seldom kiss really well. Their minds are not on it. They are always thinking of what they are going to wheedle out of the man for the kiss.

THERE are two kinds of wives, both being sure of their husbands. The difference consists in what they are sure of.

# THE EXQUISITE EPISODE

By Helen Woljeska

## I

THEY were giving short plays by Dunsany.

Ransford, tall, slim, brown, and excessively well groomed, had an orchestra chair.

His mind wandered. . . .

Before him sat a young woman in a *purée marron* chiffon blouse. A delicate perfume emanated from her.

"Violettes de Parme, Legrand—" appraised Ransford. He was a connoisseur in things feminine.

On the stage, gods and beggars were stalking.

"Dunsany . . ." thought Ransford, "Dunsany. . . . He always puts me in mind of Andersen's tale of 'The King's New Clothes.' I'm afraid I'm like the indecent little girl. . . ."

He yawned discreetly.

Suddenly he became conscious of the fact that somebody was looking at him —must have been looking at him for some time—

He sent his rather melancholy eyes roving over the audience, his nostril already scenting adventure, while the droop of his mouth mocked at himself. . . .

It was not long before he discovered the source of his queer sensation. In one of the boxes sat a woman of imperious manner whose large, brilliant eyes were fixed upon him with steadfast and mysterious smile.

And at once his eyes answered, plunging into hers and holding them with questioning challenge.

Slowly, gravely, she bowed.

He answered with eagerness.

And her beautiful white hand beckoned him to her side.

Just then a storm of applause broke loose. The *purée marron* blouse heaved ecstatically. Ransford was enveloped in clouds of Violettes de Parme.

He arose.

He walked up the aisle, turned the corner, picked his way to the box.

As he entered, the curtain came down for the *entr'acte* and the house flamed up in a sea of light. *En silhouette*, like the statue of some dusky amber goddess, he saw the magnificent stranger sitting before him. With the stately grace of an empress she stretched out her hand in greeting. He bowed over it. Then took the seat by her side.

"I am glad you came," she said with a low, vibrant voice. "The moment I happened to see you I knew that you would fit into the circle of my life—and once I find someone like that, I do not wish to lose him again without at least a passing word. . . ."

"I feel sure that we shall be friends and understand each other very well indeed—" he murmured.

But the mocking smile which was so becoming to his mouth and eyes played across his face.

It seemed to please her. She smiled back, a swift, triumphant caress in her eyes.

"Does it not seem as though we were two masks, addressing one another during some brilliant Venetian carnival?" she asked. "To me, you see, life appears a strange and sumptuous pageant, in which mysterious beings, masked and draped in secretive

dominos, meet—sometimes revealing in a glance, a smile, the treasures they carry hidden under sable folds of sombre conventions. . . . If a congenial spirit sees—he understands, he beckons, he knows: here is the possibility of wonderful joys. . . . Of course it happens that one makes mistakes. One imagines beckoning to a prince—and he proves to be but a crude clown. Still it is worth the trying."

"I agree with you. My life is nothing, if not a quest for the rare and the beautiful. In my search for that I would not mind some day breaking my heart."

"Yes. Breaking the heart—" she murmured. "For, of course, one has to pay for whatever one enjoys . . . even for such common things as food and drink . . . how much more for all the delights congenial intercourse can yield! Our heart's blood is not too high a price for them. I, for one, am always willing to squander mine for companionship, friendship, love. . . ."

"Love—" he repeated— "love—Does that word have the same meaning for any two human beings—or are there as many different conceptions of it as there are men and women?"

"What does it mean to you?" she asked.

"I have never found that love of which I carry a dim ideal somewhere in my head or heart. When I find it I shall experience the most exquisite episode of my life. Now I merely know that what I mean by love does not in the least resemble either the domesticated or the lurid emotion people about me seem to call by that name. You, perhaps, can tell me? You seem a woman of free and daring intellect."

She lowered her lids.

"Yes," she said, "I am a free woman. But that does not mean that I am free. . . . I do not bow before any of the conventions and rules and dogmas of society—but I do bow before my own laws. And the more I listen to their dictation, the more clearly defined and imperious grows their voice."

"And may one hear what those laws are?"

She had again raised her lids and looked into his face, but at the half sad lines about his mouth rather than at the mocking glitter of his eyes. And she spoke gently, patiently, indulgently, as one speaks to a child.

"My laws teach me not to revere the letter, but only the spirit. Not to revere a marriage certificate, but only love. And love has to legitimatize itself by proving irresistible—not by some written permit given out like a dog licence."

He laughed. "Splendid. And once it has legitimatized itself—you follow it wherever it leads—"

"Even to death." Her eyes glowed proudly. "For whenever a woman loves, she plays with the possibility of a terrible and shameful death. That gives an added tremor men know nothing about."

"It seems to me you teach me to understand your conventional sisters rather than yourself. What is it that makes love seem worth while to you in spite of all its dangers and terrors?"

"But what *else* is there to live for?" she in turn asked him. "Nothing can reconcile a woman to the fact that she has to live at all, to suffer, to fade, to die—nothing but the knowledge that she was allowed to bring romance and tenderness and ecstasy into the lives of some beloved men."

"Romance and tenderness and ecstasy," he mocked, "not to forget sorrow and grief and despair."

"Never deliberately," she replied with fervour.

He laughed lightly.

"But you were to tell me what the exquisite love is like. . . . Then, to resume: after you have found the friend who, you know without a doubt, is truly yours, and your heart has called to him, and he has come—what then?"

"Then—" she said—"we live for the present moment only, we make our love supreme in its charm, different from any other that has gone before or must come after by being supremely,

defiantly ourselves. We reach up to the stars and down into our own deepest depths for jewels to adorn. We scorn the cheap makeshifts of subterfuge and half-truths. And we drink the glowing wine of joy and terror together in perfect understanding, faith, and devotion—until—until—" She halted.

He took her up. "Until—until—! There is the sentimental stumbling block! There is the worm on the most gorgeous rose! 'Until—until—' Why did you not have the courage to finish: 'until we have bored ourselves to death'? This 'until' shows that the modern free woman, the rebel, *l'affranchie*, is at heart just as timid and convention-bound as her mid-Victorian sister. The only difference is that what the one professed for her husband the other professes for her lover or for several lovers in proper chronological sequence: a long-drawn-out, strenuous faithfulness, the willingness to share drab every-day struggles, a mass of utilitarian, gross, ugly things which, by their very ugliness, seem to you to impart a sanctifying halo to a passion which otherwise might appear too beautifully pagan and untrammelled.

"Ah, I see, even you look horrified. For I am attacking woman's holiest of holiest—Time! Time alone, in her eyes, can raise a passion above frivolity. How absurd! How utterly irrelevant! Why drag in time and even eternity? The essential is not how long a passion lasts, but how deep, how wonderful, how unique it is. Is love a piece of cloth that it should be judged according to its durability? Is it not rather a most fragile work of art, a cobwebby lace, a rapturous song—to be judged by its grace and subtlety, its fire and perfume, its magic and intensity? What do I care how many other men a woman has loved and will love—just so she brings me supreme rapture while I hold her in my arms? I can imagine a love that would not outlast an hour and still be the most sublime experience of a lifetime. I can imagine a woman of the most subtle and exquisite charm, crowding all her witchery, fire, and tenderness into one short hour—and then passing on, never again to return—leaving behind her an exquisite vision which no after mood can modify, no lesser sequence destroy. . . . That is my ideal: *la dame qui passe!* Do you think that a woman like that can be found in this world?"

The beautiful stranger's eyes had grown very dark.

"Perhaps—" she whispered—"perhaps. . . ."

## II

THE curtain had descended for the last time.

Ransford stood beside the woman of the mysterious smile and helped her into her gorgeous evening wraps. And as his arms enfolded her he suddenly knew beyond a doubt that this woman could be, that she must be, his most exquisite episode. Already he saw the light of tenderness glorifying her beauty, mingling with the sombre flame of passion in her velvet eye, with the exultant smile of triumph on her imperious lip. And as he bent his face close to hers, he whispered a request that was almost a command in its eagerness and assurance.

But she drew back.

A shadow of grief passed over her proud face, leaving it strangely altered.

"Beloved—" she whispered. "I want to be the episode most exquisite in your whole life. . . . And to be that—I must forever remain—a dream. . . ."

Freeing herself from his arms, she left the box and disappeared in the crowd.

And Ransford stood motionless.

He let her go.

For he knew that she was right.

# BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF A MOTION-PICTURE PALACE

By Charles Hanson Towne

ONE day in Spring,
When the city lay like a golden pattern
Spread for the gods to walk upon,
I saw a long line of people
Waiting to enter a motion-picture show.
Flaming billboards
Announced a lurid drama,
And the tragic eyes of a popular actress
Stared out at the passers-by.

Within, I knew it was hot and dark,
Stuffy and artificial;
I knew that mechanical music would be playing,
And sailors would hug their girls in the shadowy place.
There would be an odour of humanity
Unpleasant in such surroundings.
Yet into this dim cavern they filed,
Men, women, and little children,
Lured by the red-and-black signboard
And the enchanting name of a screen favourite.
Here they would see the semblance of the great out-of-doors,
Spurious cowboys and pseudo train-robberies,
Flat trees against a wonderful skyline,
And close-ups of studio faces
Too well massaged to be beautiful.

And within a stone's throw there was a trolley-car
That would have taken that pale crowd
Out into the open country in twenty minutes.

A MAN will always fall in love with a woman who encourages him discreetly in his permanent love affair with himself.

# BEFORE THE DAWN

A MELODRAMA IN ONE ACT

By Wilson Hicks

THE PERSONS:

MARJY
TOM
OLD TERRY, *who does not appear*
STATION MASTER

*The scene is the waiting room of a village railway station; a small place, in keeping with a town of a few hundred persons. The ceiling is festooned with cobwebs; the walls have fairly curled under the heat of summer. A clock ticks in a crazy monotone and a pair of wall lamps burn reluctantly, giving hardly any light, but serving to stir up the persistent darkness. In the rear wall a square hole serves as ticket window, now closed. To the right and up from the window is a yellow, worn map; lower, to the left, a blackboard with a stick of chalk on a string. Doors are at either side of the room; one leads to the tracks; the other gives access to an outside stair which connects a room above, where there is a telegraph instrument. In a corner is a huge stove, its pipe writhing to a flue. The floor is rough and littered; the whole place is ancient, smelly, depressive. The only other furnishings are two grimy benches which huddle with their backs together in the middle of the room.*

*On one of the benches sits a girl, her head in her hands. She is silent. Steps descending the outside stair cause her to look up an instant, but she resumes her former pose, nor is she aroused further by the entrance of an aged, limping man, the station master, who places against a wall a short ladder which he climbs, poking a key in the face of the clock. He glances at the girl as he goes out.*

*It is midsummer, on a night consumed except for that blackest part that just precedes the first intimation that day is waking. From out the darkness, in the door with the tracks beyond, appears Tom, a young man, his coat hanging from his arm, his necktie twisted. He stops short, gulps, apparently trying to overcome the frightened look on his face which suggests he is tossed between attempted composure and a state of torment. He weakly places a foot on the floor.*

TOM

(*In a whisper, moving unsteadily toward the girl.*) Marjy!

MARJY

(*The girl has risen, rushing to him.*) Tell me—what is it?

(*She yields to his embrace. They part, staring at each other a moment.*)

TOM

(*In a hollow voice.*) You look afraid. I'm—no, I'm not afraid. I shouldn't have left you alone so long. What you been doing? (*His eyes wander.*) Say, Marjy, I— (*He chokes back a sob.*)

MARJY

(*Earnestly.*) There must be something the matter. You don't act right. You didn't take long—but I was kinda sleepy—and (*vaguely*) Oh, I don't know. Everything's so funny. (*She*

*bends toward him.*) I did worry. What happened? What's he say?

TOM

(*Pulling himself together under extreme effort.*) I'm in a fix. (*He begins pacing the floor, glowering into space. He turns, his voice rising with determination.*) You and I got to do something and do it now. (*Madly.*) When's the train? God, Marjy, help me figure this out!

MARJY

(*Mystified.*) I don't understand. What on earth, Tom?

TOM

(*Resignedly.*) Well, I went over there. (*He stands still.*)

MARJY

Like you said.

TOM

(*Almost inaudibly.*) And I saw him. (*Suddenly losing grasp on himself he almost shouts.*) And, Marjy—all I know is I love you—and don't care. (*Pause.* TOM *partly regains control.*) When's the train?

MARJY

(*She takes* TOM'S *arm. They turn to bench.*) You act like you've gone through something awful. (TOM *is shaken, his face ghastly in the dim light. They sit,* MARJY *peering at him. Then she almost cries out, noticing for the first time his frightened expression.*) Something has happened! You're not yourself!

TOM

Don't make any noise—not now. We've got to go through with this, and it's all me to blame—everything.

MARJY

I want to know. I must know.

TOM

(*Jerkily.*) I saw him. I went to his house. It was dark—the birds in this hole get up early all right—but they're asleep this time of the morning. The old man hadn't locked his door—I tried it first, planning to break in otherwise. I lit matches—went in a lot of rooms—found his.

MARJY

Wasn't it scary?

TOM

He was asleep. (TOM *looks steadily at the floor.*) I didn't have no trouble finding him—what you'd told me about the place helped—so I shook him—he almost jumped out of bed. . . . I held him—put my hand on his mouth (*he shudders*)—I held him—and—

MARJY

What'd you say?

TOM

I asked him did he know you.

MARJY

You knew he did. What'd you ask him that for?

TOM

I didn't know where to begin. I hated him. I hated everything (*looks at her*) almost. I didn't care.

(TOM *buries his face in his hands.*)

MARJY

You told him what you wanted? Did he give it to you? Tell me—there's no use in all this. Did he say anything about me?

(*Rising slowly,* TOM *begins his pacing again. Then he halts abruptly.*)

TOM

When's the train, I say?

MARJY

Why do you keep asking me? It's through here at four o'clock. Once in a while somebody catches it. Travelling men do, every night or so. The ticket seller ain't on duty, though. We'll have to pay the conductor.

TOM

And that's the only train there is—until noon to-morrow, ain't it?

MARJY

Yes, Tom.

TOM

(*Desperately.*) We've got to get this one. I wouldn't hang around here any longer than I'd have to.

MARJY

And we can go only where we want to go on the train that's coming in pretty soon. (*Looks at clock.*) It's ten minutes to four now.

TOM

(*Absently.*) Ten minutes to four. (*With a start.*) Ten minutes to four! (*He drops heavily on to the bench.*)

MARJY

Won't you be glad when we're away from here—and get down on the oil lands—and you can work hard—and before long—

TOM

I can't hear no more of that! You haven't helped me figure this out yet!

MARJY

(*Helplessly.*) But how can I when you won't tell me what's the trouble?

TOM

(*His head drops.*) Marjy—

MARJY

Tell me, right now.

TOM

You know what we came here for, don't you? You know you and me talked things over before we left the city—where I had a job and everything was all right?

MARJY

You're not giving up?

TOM

No. But you don't know. (*Grimly.*) You don't know I've failed.

MARJY

Failed! Then you didn't get nothing over at Old Terry's? He didn't give you nothing?

TOM

(*Echoing.*) He didn't give me nothing.

MARJY

(*Beginning to weep.*) Can't we get away, then? What'll we do? We had only enough money to get here and nowheres else. No place to sleep—nothing to eat—and we were counting on—

TOM

(*Making an awkward attempt to console her, but soon dropping his hands from about her shoulders.*) It ain't you needs consoling, Marjy. I need it—bad.

MARJY

If you don't tell me what you did over at Old Terry's, I'll—

TOM

When you told me about you and Old Terry we planned to see him, didn't we? We wanted to get away from that rotten room in the city—away from everybody—

MARJY

Yes, but go on.

TOM

So we planned to come here and see Old Terry. (*Vacantly.*) We came—and now we're in a fix—a terrible fix—

MARJY

I can't imagine what you think's so terrible about it.

TOM

When I saw him a while ago he said he knew he'd done something wrong to you, but that he was getting old and didn't care. He said for you to see him and maybe he'd talk something different.

MARJY

If you didn't get anything (*she turns quickly on* TOM) then what's the use of waiting for the train?

TOM

There's no reason to holler, Marjy. I picked up a few dollars over at Old

Terry's even if he wouldn't give me nothing.

MARJY

(*As if lightning had struck nearby.*) You don't mean you stole? You didn't take anything that didn't belong to you?

TOM

Yes, I took something that didn't belong to me. It wasn't much. Only this—

(*He holds out a few dollars in his cupped hands.*)

MARJY

But, Tom, that's not like you. What'd you do it for? Oh, I never thought it of you. (*She sobs.*)

TOM

Wasn't like me, you say? No. And Old Terry wasn't like a man, either. If he had been he wouldn't done what he did. Look here, Marjy. You remember when we got married? How happy we were? I'm still happy with you, but I've had an awful fight to stay that way. You know what you told me?

MARJY

It's no time to talk of that now. The train—

TOM

(*Relentlessly*). When you told me what happened after Old Terry raised you from a baby with no folks, after you'd grown up to be a big girl and pretty—and just starting out—(*he falters*).

MARJY

(*Brokenly.*) But you never stole before.

TOM

No, and I never—Marjy! You know what any other kind of a husband would have done, don't you? When you'd told any other fellow he'd probably left you in a minute. Maybe some guy would put his arms around you and said he would forget it, but few men wouldn't sworn to get Old Terry and fix him once for all. (*Pause.*) Marjy—(*he breaks*) to think my little girl—

MARJY

(*Between sobs.*) I know no one else would have been like you, Tom—you looked over everything. But now—it seems like you've changed.

TOM

I never changed! I never was any other way. You told me Old Terry had ruined your life, and you waited until after we were married to tell me He didn't ruin your life, did he?

MARJY

Not my life—no. You make up for that. But that's what they say of girls when—

TOM

And when you told me it was an old man you trusted, then him to do what he did—I felt he oughtn't to live.

MARJY

(*With a terrified cry.*) You say you felt like he shouldn't live?

(TOM *resumes his pacing.* MARJY *appears exhausted at trying to fathom the cause of his strange actions.*)

TOM

(*Stopping.*) No, not that, Marjy. I knew he'd—done an awful—crime. I—I didn't know what to think.

MARJY

(*As in a dream.*) You stole first—and now you say you felt like he shouldn't live. (*Pause.*) That means you felt like—

TOM

(*Grasping his chance. An uncanny calmness has come upon him.*) I did kill him. I—

MARJY

Don't!

TOM

(*Determined to get it out now that he has begun.*) I did kill him. But I didn't mean to. I wouldn't have done it—only for your sake, Marjy. He wanted to put me out when I asked him for money to let us get away on—just

a little money for you. I told him you and me was married. I told him I'd just found out what he'd done to you. You remember—(*he smiles weirdly*) you told me it'd be all right to ask him for just a little?

MARJY

(*Hysterically.*) What'll we do? It's almost four o'clock now. Two minutes to four. The train—

TOM

I don't care about the train. I want this to be all right. I killed him—Oh, Marjy!

(*The girl, helpless, strokes* TOM's *hair.*)

MARJY

You stole—you killed him—because I told you *that.*

TOM

(*Faintly.*) He told me to get out. I told him I wouldn't go until he gave me something for you.

MARJY

But we could have gotten along somehow.

TOM

He went to the telephone to call the sheriff. I pushed him—too hard—he fell—his head struck. I didn't mean to—but he was old.

MARJY

Maybe you didn't kill him. Maybe you just thought so. (*They are silent an instant*). Tom, I hear a train whistle.

TOM

We got to get away. The old man told me I better leave because his housekeeper comes early—about this time.

MARJY

But must we go? Hadn't we better stay? I never thought we'd ever be in such a terrible fix—and we were so happy. (*She sobs.*) Oh, I can't bear it—I can't—to think that you— Oh, it's worse than death!

TOM

Why shouldn't we try to get away? (*He seizes her arm.*) Should we stay here?

MARJY

The people—the sheriff—everybody!

TOM

They'd all know we was strangers. They'd suspect us.

MARJY

The housekeeper may be finding him—

TOM

We won't have a chance when it's light.

MARJY

I can't understand it. It's all so awful. Why did it happen to me? To you? Why did you have to commit—Tom, I hear the whistle!

TOM

No, you didn't. . . . Was it, Marjy?

(TOM *starts here, then there, not knowing what to do. The girl runs to the door with the tracks beyond.*)

MARJY

(*Returning to him.*) I know it's just around that bend! The headlight don't show yet—but (*she glances at the clock*) it's a little after four now—

TOM

That wasn't no whistle, was it? You imagined it, didn't you?

*Footsteps are heard on the stair outside. They turn, trembling, to the door. The station master enters, looks slowly at the couple, who follow him with their eyes. The aged man goes to the blackboard, runs his fingers down the string and takes hold of the chalk, which he fumbles. Then he recovers it, and lifting his arms as if the action pained him, he writes in a big, scrawly hand:*

"NO. 4, DUE AT 4 a.m., TWO HOURS LATE."

*Curtain.*

# THE TINKERS' DOG

By Francis Carlin

A BARGAIN I made with the tinkers
And I but a lump of a lad,
When they sold me a dog for the shilling
That was all I had.

Stiff were the hairs on his body,
The tail of which never was curled,
Being hung on a hound that had always
Been down in the world.

For the tinkers are terrible people
With neither a home nor a hob,
But they sang in the Pub of Molary
After spending the bob;

And their songs were the best of the bargain,
For I had them by tongue and by thought
Long after the tinkers were followed
By the dog I bought.

# ORIENTALE

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

DEW, in forgotten gardens drips
Down curious sculptures, calm as death,
Silence upon their marble lips
That once drew living breath.

Slow water impiously mars
The silver image of the sky
In pools where drift the splintered stars
And mystic lilies lie.

And the small winds are numerous
With tales that best were never told:
Strange words that move and trouble us—
Names that we knew of old!

What are these dreams of lost delight! . . .
Rising from irreligious lands,
Is it the moon who yields the night
Her pale, Buddhistic hands?

# MODERN IMPROVEMENTS

By Bertram Bloch

## I

THE father of Clement Trotter was a narrow-minded, platitudinous man of business. When Clement languidly emerged from the university with two degrees, a genuine Colonial armchair and a bulldog, the elder Trotter immediately insisted that he "get down to business."

Because of his love for his father—and his dependence upon his pocket-book—Clement, with an expressive shrug of his shoulders, complied with the paternal request. He decided to become a lover of beauty. His father, who had studied at the International Correspondence School, did not remember seeing that profession listed on their books. He solicited information.

"By a lover of beauty," quoth his son, from the depths of the armchair (it really was a valuable armchair, having almost come over in the *Mayflower*), "by a lover of beauty, I mean one who makes the pursuit and discovery and dissemination of beauty his life-work. In this world of gross and sordid materialism, there are, alas! too few engaged in that soul-satisfying undertaking."

"Is there money in it?" asked his father, in his practical way.

Clement sighed. What use to seek to impress this man, whom an evil chance had made his parent, with the wonder and romance and æsthetic thrills that came to the pursuer of beauty in lieu of money?

"There will be money in it, incidentally," he said, assuming a hard, practical, money-in-the-bank tone that tickled his father's ears. "Take this chair for example, the very chair in which I am now sitting. I purchased it for seven dollars. It's worth fifty. There's money in antiques; there's money in discovering a new singer or painter. And, of course, I'll be able to net a fair income from my monographs on various phases of art." He smiled contentedly. "Yes, indeed, I'll be able to dispense with your aid in no time."

He really meant, "at no time," but when one has a practical father it is well not to choose one's words too carefully.

The elder Trotter, impressed by the two degrees, which were facts, by the Colonial chair, which was also a fact, and by the word "monographs," which he didn't understand, gave a rather doubtful consent that his son become a lover of beauty.

"Clement's gone into the art business," he told his friends, two-fisted, hard-headed men of affairs to whom he could hardly say, "Clement has become a lover of beauty."

## II

WHEN Clement Trotter had been pursuing beauty for two years he chanced one day to eat at the restaurant in which Daisy Mitchell worked.

In that time he had not confined himself exclusively to such inanimate objects as Colonial chairs and monographs. He had, to use a phrase he wouldn't have used, pursued it also on the hoof. He had, in fact, sought it more often at Dionysian revels than in the contemplative solitude of his study. In the words of the troubadours of

Broadway, he was "a bear at picking good-lookers." He came among them seeking beauty, and he found it.

Word of his nocturnal adventures, some of them wild riots of colour—red lips, white shoulders, golden wine, black eyes and blue coat—coming to the ears of his father, that worthy gentleman, denying that any publicity is good publicity, objected.

Not that he objected flatly to the sowing of wild oats. As a practical man he realized that since the world had so decreed it, wild oats had to be sown, but as the same practical man, he disapproved of the employment of pipe and tabor.

"Be a little more quiet about it," he cautioned. "It's not a circus, you know. You don't have to parade down Main Street."

Then as an afterthought he added, "And to keep people from talking you might pay attention to a respectable girl once in a while."

Thereupon Clement Trotter read his father a homily on the word "respectable." It was his belief that girls were respectable only because they were afraid to be otherwise.

"That's why they go in for such unbeautiful things as suffrage and social work. Respectability is a flying in the face of Nature. It is a perversion of all the gifts of the gods." He shook his finger at his father. "You—you and your kind—destroyed Athens and made Venus cover her face."

"I'm glad she's covered something," said his father.

But Clement said, "Bah!" and returned to his revels.

All of which has no real bearing on the story save to show that when Clement's eye rested twice on a girl it was a great compliment, and that when it rested three times, the girl could die, knowing that life would pay her no greater tribute.

Think, then, what it meant when he sat and stared at Daisy for a full five minutes, his cocktail poised in his hand.

Now, nine out of ten men who came into the restaurant thought Daisy beautiful, indicating that Venus had been a little precipitate in going into retirement. Yes, nine out of ten thought her beautiful, and six of those nine endeavoured to hold her in conversation.

But Daisy was fonder of tips than of compliments, and when the tips were gathered in the conversations ended. For Daisy possessed what Clement called "that damnably destructive Puritan code of morals." Without being able to advance any rational explanations for her conduct, she nevertheless preserved her chastity with great care.

Clement had met this attitude toward life before. Several times girls had timidly suggested that they wouldn't do anything wicked. In the majority of these cases, Clement had convinced the girls that "obeying the dictates of nature" could not possibly be considered —except by a twisted world—as an act of wickedness. In the few other cases, fear of parental discipline or religious scruples defeated him, or rather caused him willingly to give up the attempt. I say willingly, for such excessive and irrational timidity robbed the girl of any claim to beauty. Beauty is a bold, courageous thing, free as the winds of heaven and as untamable. Warped by fear it ceases to be beauty.

But Daisy wasn't afraid of anything. With her cool, grey eyes she looked life in the face, and even though it leered a little, she wasn't afraid. She was fresh and young and vigorous. Not having been brought up in the glorious freedom of a farm, she walked without slouching and didn't suffer from indigestion. She possessed a certain optimism, based on nothing at all save her animal spirits, and a sympathy for most animate things which gave her a lovable naïveté. While she wouldn't have appreciated Cezanne or Debussy or old Chinese tapestries, she did love colour and song and pretty fabrics.

Clement talked to her, and came back another time to continue the conversation, though he objected to the noise and sterile whiteness of the restaurant. And after the second visit there was a

third, and a fourth, and a tenth, and a —quite a good many more.

He was impressed with Daisy and Daisy was impressed with him. He was different from the others. There was nothing sly about him. He wasn't given to winks and insinuations and innuendoes. He didn't run a patent eye over her when she waited on him. There was nothing surreptitious in his manner of lovemaking. Clement sincerely believed that when he induced a girl to become a votary of Venus, he was rescuing her from the brink of hypocritical asceticism; that he was teaching her the joy of living.

Daisy, being more than usually lovely, must be taught the litany of love. The thought of her going through life an Amaryllis with no one to sport with depressed him.

But even worse was in store for him. He learned one day that Daisy was engaged to a young man endeavouring to break into major league baseball.

His artistic soul revolted. Every cranny of it filled with horror. When he met the man, a raw young giant, with broken finger-nails and a red mop of unkempt, stringy hair, he all but wept. Give this beautiful creature, this morsel for a god, this consummate achievement of nature, over to that buck-toothed barbarian! Such a deed would be on a par with the destruction of the cathedral at Rheims. Better to hang a Botticelli in a kitchen or use a Stradivarius in a jazz band than to feed Daisy to this Minotaur. No, such a thwarting of the will of nature could not be. The dome of the heavens would crack and crush the earth. . . . She must be saved. She must be saved, even if he would have to marry her himself. . . .

What was he thinking of? He laughed the thought away. He was losing his greatest pride, his sense of values. But still she must be saved. . . .

He poured his views of life and beauty, a glittering mass, into her lap. She looked at them. She did not reject them because she was engaged or because she feared her parents or because she dreaded eternal damnation. But she rejected them all the same. Naïvely she spoke of something which she called "true love," something which she felt that the young, fresh, broken-nailed ball-player would give her. And in return she would love him and make him a true wife.

Clement groaned. A true wife! He could see her in the rôle. She who was formed to reign diademed over the festivals of the gods would lean, heated and dishevelled, over a stove, dirty children clinging to her dirty dress. What irony! Again the thought of marrying her came to him. He sneered it away.

But it persisted. All over the world beautiful maidens were being sacrificed for want of a Theseus. But here was a Theseus. . . . Marry some day, he supposed he would. Convention, tradition and the weight of his father's will would bring that about. . . . And since he would marry, why not . . . ? He put away the thought, but it hung round the corner of his mind, where his eye would see it whenever he turned.

In the end he proposed marriage to her. King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid.

But Daisy, knowing life far better than she knew fairy stories, did not believe him. Her eyes became troubled. Daisy, saturated with the scepticism of the city, spoke to him sorrowfully.

"I was afraid you'd try somethin' like this. I've been scared of it down in me heart all the time."

"But I mean it, Diana." He called her Diana because her whiteness and her chastity put him in mind of the moon-goddess. "I love you, you magnificent creature."

"You're not kidding me?"

"Have I ever lied to you?"

"N-no."

Then he burst into a rhapsody of love. And in the end he convinced her that she was the most beautiful woman on earth, and as such deserved the spoils of earth, which her awkward young first baseman could certainly not give her.

Daisy was convinced. Her eyes filled with pleasure at the pictures he drew. . . But Daisy had a peculiar sense of honour. She had pledged her word to her broken-nailed lover, and she refused to be false to it. Even Clement's denunciation of her as a Victorian failed to move her. But then it is just possible that she didn't know what a Victorian was.

Clement stormed and Clement raged. He had reached out his hand from Olympus, and she had refused it. What sentimental folly! His pearl forebore to exchange her dirty shell for his jewelled setting because, forsooth, she had made a promise to a—clam.

But Daisy remained firm. She was sad, she was heavy-hearted, but she was adamant. She went on with her prosaic life, thinking as seldom as possible of the splendour and the riches she was giving up. Once and once only, she gave sign to her mop-haired lover that all was not right. At the movies one evening, when the silken-garbed heroine, raising such eyebrows as never bloomed on land or sea, welcomed the "guests" into the rococo ballroom of her house, Daisy wept. But she refused to offer any explanation, and her lover put it down to the unfathomable vagaries of her sex.

But even the Sphinx could not forever keep her secret. Before long George, the ball-player, learned of her sacrifice. With rare finesse he extracted the truth from her. The next day his manager told him that he was to be shipped back to the "bushes" for further seasoning. In this hour of darkness he found time to think of Daisy. Without realizing that he was doing anything heroic, he wrote her a letter, breaking the engagement, and slipped out of town before she could answer it.

Daisy shed tears over the letter, and even Clement was impressed until he remembered that self-sacrifice was sentimentality, and that sentimentality had gone out with the last century. Then he decided that the lanky first-baseman was giving up Daisy because he intended finding a girl out West, and so save railroad fare. But he didn't express this opinion to Daisy. He was wise enough not to.

## III

With the passing of George a great obstacle was removed, only to bring into view another, equally obstructive and fraught with far graver danger to Clement, himself.

Across his horizon there now blazed the phrase, "What will people say?" and more particularly, "What will the governor say?"

It really was a rhetorical question, this last. He knew well enough what the governor would say. The governor's bump of love for the beautiful was not highly developed, whereas his bump of reverence for social position was considerably more than a hillock, while his money bump was a veritable mountain. He knew that were he to go to his father and say, "Father, I am going to marry Diana," his father would reach for Bradstreet with one hand and for the Social Register with the other. On finding that Diana's rating was zero-zero in one and less than that in the other, his father would exclaim: ". . ."

Clement shuddered at the mental picture of his father, wrathful and denunciatory. It would be necessary to be subtle.

Dispassionately he probed the situation.

On the money side there was nothing to do. Daisy was poor, with no rich relatives tottering towards an early grave, nor with any other kind of rich relatives.

On the social side, the aspect was no more promising. A sergeant of police was the hetman of Daisy's family; and he was only a cousin several times removed.

No, the attack would have to be made with other weapons. What weapons? Daisy's beauty, Daisy's honesty and courage and sympathy.

Were these the weapons with which

to enter the ring against his father? He feared not. Like lances of glass they would shiver and break before the onslaught of the parental battle-axe.

And yet there were no others. He thought. In his hands, adroitly managed, as only he could manage them, they might be made to do. Beauty was unquestionably an asset. Simplicity—well, it behoved him to make of her simplicity a shining weapon. . . . These must be made to win his mother and his sisters, and, through them, his father.

But though Daisy was beautiful and simple, and though she possessed a certain natural ease and innate rhythm, her acquired movements left something to be desired. Her arms occasionally rested on her hips, while one shoulder swung higher than the other. She sat slouchily, and she chewed gum.

Would these faults outweigh her virtues in the eyes of his people? The answer was easy. They would. Virtues are pallid things. They serve chiefly to fill holes that would otherwise harbour faults. Goodness may bring happiness of the interior kind, but it doesn't bring rings to the doorbell. Daisy might be courageous and honest and sweet, but her laugh was a bit vacant and she did tilt her soup-plate the wrong way.

But only time could bring about a metamorphosis in Daisy. To a lover as ardent as Clement was just then, Time is anything but a kindly old man, and even if he had been willing to wait he didn't see how he was to change Daisy. That needed contact with people who mattered, but to get that contact Daisy would have to be changed. A vicious circle, as the saying is.

Clement despaired through seventeen cigarettes, then a bright light burst upon him.

He rose and admired himself in his mirror, standing with his long, artistic fingers twined behind his head. The Devil take it, but he was clever. No gainsaying that. Then to show the mirror how easy it all had been, he yawned and lit another cigarette.

Then he sat down and looked steadily at the great light. Its remarkable brilliancy consisted of the idea of converting Daisy's liabilities into assets. If Daisy was crude and unlettered and even a little tough—why the thing to do was to give her crudeness and her illiteracy and her toughness a less vulgar and more attractive name, and parade it before the world with pomp and ceremony.

Crude, illiterate, tough? Not at all. Daisy was primitive. And what did that mean? Simply that she was a child of the pungent earth, free of the hothouse, decaying veneer of our false, unnatural civilization. A queer mixture of adjectives, but expressive. She was cousin to the winds of Heaven, and the seven seas were her— Her relationship to the seven seas escaped him at the moment, but it would come, when needed.

It did come. And a lot more with it. He found that he had touched a subject which opened up a veritable treasure-house of luscious phrases: The civilization, so-called, of the past thousand years had brought the world to the crumbling brink of black chaos. Man was a perversion of himself. In the wilderness of life, he no longer prayed for manna but for manner. He envied the fleet gazelle but wore shoes. He envied the strength of the lion but lived by the chafing-dish. He had lost the touch of nature which makes the world kin. The blind and speechless army ant works in partnership with his fellow termites with marvellous precision, but all the words taken from a dictionary two feet thick no longer bind two men together. At their festivals the old Norsemen leaped six feet in full armour; to-day, when he dances, man doesn't even lift his feet from the ground.

The material was endless. It had need to be. Clement flung it with a lavish hand. He sowed it where he walked—and talked. It took root. It grew. It burgeoned . . .

## IV

He took his theory with him when his family migrated to a northern beach. It bore the transplanting well. It became "the thing" that summer.

"We must return to the primitive or we decay," was heard more often even than "I bid a no-trump."

In an effort to return to the primitive, bathing-suits were made shorter and clingier. Simple, naïve little wriggles were introduced into the dancing; charming little gestures, which our ancestors used before the invention of words, were introduced somewhat later. At the same time the stock of good-looking life-guards and chauffeurs rose above par, and only the timely discovery that "society men" could be more primitive even than the proletariest of the proletariat saved many families from losing faithful servants and their daughters at the same time.

And then, with brass, strings, wood-wind and chorus going great guns, Diana, née Daisy, was thrust upon the stage.

The entrance was well-timed. With one accord the audience applauded. No, there was an exception. Trotter, the elder, reached for his Bradstreet and his Social Register, as Clement knew he would, and not finding Daisy in either he yawned.

But even his rocky nature could not withstand the flood of disapproval that swept over him.

"If she had money and family she would not be primitive, would she?" the wild waves cried, and before long he was forced to beat his sword into a walking-stick and join the procession.

Clement had won. The world—his world—lay prostrate before Daisy's feet, begging to be walked on.

Daisy was bewildered, stunned, overjoyed. At first. After a time the bewilderment passed. Also the stunned feeling. And towards the end of the season, when the whirl of fêtes and dances and teas and scandals was less breath-taking, something of the joy went, too.

Daisy began to perceive that she was being accepted as something queer, something exotic, and she didn't like it.

Clement became conscious of the same thing. He rather liked it, but he soon saw that the cult of the primitive, though it might last a little longer, was fated to go the way of all cults, and that when it had gone Daisy would be found outside the sacred circle.

Again he smoked endless cigarettes. Again a great white light came. He must have her educated against the time when the primitive would pass into the purple shades of oblivion.

Daisy, who was heartily sick of being primitive, was only too eager to be taught the habits, customs, and social instincts of her new neighbours, together with such slight knowledge of the things in books which were considered indispensable.

She had, of course, picked up a good bit of the etiquette of Clement's tribe that summer. Having a keen mind and the desire to learn the rest would be easy.

She was turned over for a space of months to a friend of Clement's, a young assistant professor, so impractical as to have burdened himself with a wife and a baby. The assistant professor, for a consideration, was willing further to burden himself with Daisy.

She proved an apt pupil. In a short time she found that her mind would retain all sorts of useless facts.

As her period of study drew to its close, the assistant professor began to suggest continuation work so pleased was he with the work of his hands. He was contemplating writing a thesis on his method of teaching and regretted bitterly that he hadn't any method.

He spoke of himself feelingly as Pygmalion, and when his wife became sarcastic wondered in his heart whether he ought not end his dry, drab existence as a hawker of knowledge and run off to some far country with this wonderful product of his art. Together on a green hill they would dwell in joyous solitude. There he would have

time to write the books that would never be born in the sharp and grinding life of the schoolroom. With this wonderful creature to minister to his wants, thoughts would come on the wings of his wishing. . . .

For years afterwards, whenever his respectable, conventional life seemed more than usually dull, he bitterly lashed himself for not having boldly and wickedly eloped with Daisy. . . . It never occurred to him that Daisy might not have been willing to elope with him.

## V

THE renovated Diana went back to Clement's family. Shorn of her gaucheries, she was welcomed with a new welcome.

Clement sighed contentedly. When the curtain would descend on the primitive for the last time, Daisy would still retain her seat in the family circle. And with new zest, he exploited his discovery, determined to squeeze out of it every drop of applause before the orchestra played the cue for the next "act."

And when the interest began to slacken in his mother's set he took his new philosophy to his old haunts among the lights. Of course he couldn't introduce Daisy, who was soon to take a place in his family, to these Bacchantes. So he turned her over to his sisters and pleaded the excuse of a new art venture.

But Broadway whispers are heard easily on Fifth Avenue. Daisy soon knew where he was going in pursuit of his art. She was displeased—displeased at being left alone with his people, whom she began to find tiresome; displeased that he had not yet ceased to harp on his one string.

Along with this displeasure came thoughts. Among these thoughts one stood out. If she was truly saving him from decay, as he claimed, why didn't he praise her and refrain from praising himself? If she was so much superior to him and his kind why did he strive so earnestly to make her fit their moulds?

She thought a lot about this, when she had time. One man she asked for the answer. Morgan Tiverton, a blond young man with a long neck and a small head, had been one of the first to sit at her feet and ask to be saved from decay. Now, when she questioned him, he winked under his monocle, and courted her. He made love to her, but didn't answer her. She chided him. He told her that in the primitive state it was perfectly all right for one man to steal another's bride—and she was only a bride-to-be. She knew that the primitive state didn't have anything to do with this, but she pardoned him and let him go on. Others had made love to her before, but she had stopped them. It may be that she was getting tired of warding them off.

So Morgan Tiverton whispered love pleas in her ear on those occasions when Clement was away.

Then one evening as he was taking her home he kissed her. She let him.

A few days later he took her driving far out into the country. He had something to say to her. He said it. Almost weeping, he told her that his family's finances were low. He was to be the sacrificial lamb to save his father from ruin. The night before he had become engaged to a wholesale grocer's daughter. He didn't love her. He loved Daisy. But what could he do? Daisy admitted that he couldn't do anything. He vowed he would continue to love her. He kissed her. She let him. He would continue to kiss her, he said, until his marriage, and when he returned from his honeymoon he would take up the kissing again.

A few weeks later another man kissed her. This man was very good-looking. Also he was married. His wife almost caught them. They were thrilled at the narrowness of the escape. Daisy laughed all the way home. She was still smiling when Clement kissed her good night.

Then, as she was disrobing, she sud-

denly stopped smiling. She looked down at her dress, the daring cut of which had won her many admiring glances—and some others. She sat on the edge of her bed.

She went out walking alone that afternoon. She met Morgan Tiverton idling before a bulletin-board. She asked him to take her to some quiet tea-room. She said she wanted to speak to him seriously. He wouldn't go.

"Last game of the series," he said. "Got five hundred up on it."

She went alone, and sat a long time.

The next evening she went to her room to dress immediately after dinner. Clement was to take her to a dance. Morgan Tiverton was to be there. Also the good-looking man with a wife.

At ten o'clock, Clement went to her room. It was empty. Just as in a melodrama, there was a note leaning against the mirror on her dressing-table. It was addressed to him. He opened it.

He read:

*Dear Clement:*

*You are right. Only the primitive can save us. I feel that very keenly. I am decaying. To the primitive I therefore turn. I married George this morning. With the money he made in the world series, we will honeymoon in California. I am sorry. But perhaps you will find someone to take my place. If not, I suggest that you and Morgan Tiverton decay together.*

DAISY.

# MORNING

## By Muna Lee

THAT tree of swaying foliage and slender stem,
Detached itself from the huddled mass of trees.
There was a flutter of awakened birds,
There was a sudden freshness on the breeze.

Day came so quietly—darkness merely passed;
Light merely spread and overreached the grey,
Unheralded by harsh colour, calm and pure—
And we were glad that dawn had come that way.

YOU wondered when it would be safe to begin kissing your first sweetheart, and you wonder when it will be safe to stop kissing your last.

WHEN a man falls violently in love, it means that some sensible girl is looking for a home.

EVERY woman has some vice. Some giggle, some freckle and some get fat.

# THE SWINE OF CIRCE

By Kathryn White Ryan

IN boarding school he ranked as one of the "poor" boys. When he visited his Aunt Martha in the summer he was constantly admonished to keep his muddy feet out of the parlour; and frequently when guests arrived she found it simplest for him to eat in the kitchen.

He was a sensitive little chap.

When he grew up his employers spoke of him as "What's-his-name." His married sister, socially effulgent, did not include him in her most exclusive list. What was the use? One game of bridge would exhaust his whole week's salary. The woman with dimpled face who once had smiled, flashed indignation and tore away her small white hand when one presumptuous day he placed his trembling fingers on it.

Childhood, boyhood, manhood, had each in turn brought him the hurt of small, pale ignominies. They clung about him. He could not shake them off. He felt his life had accumulated nothing but memories to shrink from. If only he could forget the Past! Blot it out utterly, shake himself free of it, make a new life for himself! Perhaps there was a way. Well, if he were determined enough—genuine enough. . .

He worked in secret, and for years, at the thing he loved. He probed into hearts; he trailed after words that fled into thickets. He wrote. He brought to light wisdom of a joyous, laughing kind.

And finally through the dull average of his days, he began to detect a slow piercing of something sharply exultant, victorious.

He saw his name flare out at night over the entrance of a great theatre. He saw it proclaimed upon many printed sheets. He heard it whispered by strangers as he went by them.

Fame! He had achieved Fame. Fame, the one magic that could accomplish the annihilation of the Past!

He leaned back in his chair. He glanced about his charming rooms with satisfaction. He tapped his cigarette slowly, thoughtfully. He lingered over every little act, over every moment as a connoisseur sips good wine. Life was so delightful, so new, so free of the old hurts, nothing was left of them. He blew the smoke in curling, contemplative puffs.

But a knock came to the outer door. He walked back and opened it. A round-faced man with a diamond in his cravat stood before him.

"Good old Jack!" the visitor shouted, "Yes sir, it is you, and that's a God's fact! I didn't believe it until this minute. You've become somebody after all! Don't remember me? Say, who took your part in that scrap over them apples your Aunt Martha wanted? Who—"

"Jim Bennett from the other side of the pasture!" He tried to greet him then as befits old friends: "What's the news?"

"Well, the fact of the matter is, I'm in a tight place just at present and I thought—say, you wouldn't happen to have fifty dollars you could spare?"

In a few moments he was gone, round face beaming. But his host had scarcely closed the door upon him and returned to his writing table, head lowered, eyes sober with memories, than another visitor arrived.

"You've moved up all right, old man,"

this one winked insinuatingly. "Ever stop to think of that lttle deal of ours? You know what I mean. . . . Lucky it turned out as it did. Oh, I understand! You *had* to take a chance *those* days—"

His doorbell now began to ring quite continuously.

Horace Smedly, his cousin, always an acrid sort, had a new and even more irritating note than usual in his remarks.

"Pretty different from the old days, eh what?" he commented strolling about insolently, "and it all comes from making a go of one silly little play (of course I assume you have no illusions about your play?). It hasn't anything like the quality of your early things—too bad you had to commercialize so."

A stranger flicking his hat back to a precarious edge extracted from an inner pocket a wallet and from it drew a paper: "Mr. Wallace? Mr. J. Hartford Wallace? I have a little matter here—unpaid—oversight of course. Your name is so well known now my party was able to look you up. . . . Paid this years ago you say? Sorry, but . . ."

When he was rid of him a gentleman of soberly ornate appearance called.

"I have been commissioned," he said eyeing the graceful appointments of the room, "I have been commissioned by our building committee to lay before you our needs. . . . Perhaps a stained glass window? Your name in gold? . . . There is a singular force to a donation made by a famous man. And if the man be one who at any time—even his least promising period—formed a part of the community, it becomes a spur to that community—it illustrates the—er—the, I might say the unlooked for generosity of the Maker—"

The postman left many letters. His old school wrote mentioning the pride it took in having him for one of its sons. And enclosed a printed slip that referred with loud implication to deteriorated finances. His publisher wrote importuning for more data concerning his early life. His sister breaking through the fraternal lassitude of years ardently penned: "I have always been so proud of you! I was wondering if you would not care to send Archibald to some smart school next winter."

He felt the need of diversion. He decided to accept one of the invitations to tea. As he walked across the drawing-room who should rise up before him but the dimpled woman it had taken him years to forget. She chirped gay greetings. She put her hand through his arm. He felt it flutter there while she forced her friends to observe that she claimed him. He found the incident amusing; but smiling down into her vain pretty eyes he slowly removed her fingers and walked on.

When he returned to his apartment he stood braced against the door, eyes wide, puzzled. What was happening? This wasn't new life he was getting! This was the old done over, dregs of the old—the Past stalking again, rising up, crawling out of its pit like the swine of Circe.

He pulled aside the silken curtains of his window and the bright sign over the theatre flashed at him. Fame! Is Fame after all the one thing that does *not* obliterate the Past? Does Fame, indeed, not make it walk for ever beside one?

He felt foolish, as if a distasteful joke were being played upon him.

He was a very sensitive chap.

IT is the tragedy of actresses that, by the time they are mellow, deep and subtle enough to play the parts of *grandes amoureuses*, they no longer are young enough. . . . It is the tragedy of all women.

# THE CHEQUE

By Joseph Upper

## I

WEST of the city, sparsely wooded hills made a jagged horizon line. Here and there a church spire reared itself among the trees. A hazy sky hung like a soft curtain above the hills.

John Marvin sat before the Underwood in the second office of the Solicitor's suite. He looked out of the window over the tops of city buildings and farther away across the roofs of city houses. There were indistinct blotches after that which represented various clusters of suburban dwellings. Then came the hills surmounted by the shadowy woods, and then the soft, hazy sky.

There were three offices in the Solicitor's suite. The first, the one in back of John Marvin, was the sacred retreat of the Solicitor himself. The second, where John Marvin was sitting, did duty as a library, office, and reception room. The third was given over to several attorneys and their stenographers.

Scattered through the department were other offices belonging to the Solicitor. John Marvin came from one of these. He was now doing overtime. Every evening a stenographer from some one of the Solicitor's offices sat before the Underwood in the second office of the Solicitor's suite and did overtime.

Doing overtime was simply waiting on the pleasure of the Solicitor. Sometimes the stenographer sat for hours waiting for the three bells from the inner office which meant, "I want to write a letter," and the bells did not ring; and finally the Solicitor would emerge from his official nest, wearing his hat and overcoat, and would observe gruffly, "You needn't remain any longer." Then he would go away, and the stenographer would close his desk, shut the windows, turn out the lights, lock the office and go away, too.

On other evenings you did not have to wait longer than half an hour and again the three bells rang irritably at frequent intervals and the keys of the Underwood clicked off long letters to The Honourable, the Attorney-General, or to The Honourable, the Secretary of War.

John Marvin had been in the Solicitor's office for five years. He came as a young man. He was now an old young man.

He was, he reflected, one of the many old young men who hurried back and forth through the halls of the department. They were all failures. In the general scheme of things they really amounted to nothing. They did certain things well, things that they had been doing for a long time. That was all. They were exactly what their superiors took them for—office appliances. When the Solicitor wanted to expectorate, there was the cuspidor; when he took up his pen, the massive ink bottle was conveniently near. If a care-free breeze threatened to start a revolution among the documents on his desk, he had only to reach for a paper-weight. And when he wanted to write a letter he had only to press a button three times.

John Marvin gazed wearily at the jagged horizon line of straggling woods.

"'What without asking hither hurried hence,'" he muttered to himself.

The Solicitor emerged from the recesses of his official privacy. He had his hat on.

"I won't need you any more tonight," he threw over his shoulder at John Marvin. "Don't forget to close up here."

He disappeared into the deserted hall.

John Marvin rose. Grasping the top of the typewriter desk he sent the Underwood to its mahogany cavern. Then he closed the windows, locked the door and hurried noiselessly down the empty corridor.

An hour later he sat at the table in his third-floor bedroom writing furiously.

## II

TO WRITE or not to write had always been the question with John Marvin. While he had pondered it the years had sped by. Now it must be answered. And in his third-floor bedroom he was striving to answer it. Between the hours of seven and twelve he laboured nightly, to the concern of his landlady and the amusement of the other roomers; laboured to lift himself out of the terrible slough of failure into which he saw himself slowly sinking.

Where he had once worked hopefully in the spare hours of his leisure, he now worked feverishly late into the night. Hope, pursued by fear, had broken into the run of desperation, and while the gas lamps under his window flickered and flared, and other young men passed back and forth under them to dance hall or theatre, John Marvin sat at his writing-table spurring on his galloping pen.

The morning mail piled his plate full of thick envelopes, among which he hunted eagerly in the fresh hope of finding a single thin one. Occasionally a rejected manuscript came home accompanied by an encouraging note from some editor. That was always a red-letter day for John Marvin. Then his unquenchable faith in his own power burned brightly once more and he told himself that he was coming, that he would arrive before long.

Yet the day was outwardly the same as other days. Through the dismal hours of business his Underwood recorded the multitudinous legal problems which beset the Solicitor. If it was his turn to do overtime, he sat and stared out of the window of the second office in the Solicitor's suite at the rim of hills beyond the city. That evening would find him again at his writing-table racing with time towards the goal of literary achievement. But there would be a compensating zest to his labours on such days, following, as it were, a nod of editorial approval. The strength of his refreshed hope went into his galloping pen after such days, and that inky steed responded as to the inspiration of the home stretch.

They were indeed straws which to John Marvin indicated the direction of the wind. Even he often smiled at the few and frail wisps of encouragement which he had seized upon so eagerly as prophecies of his future greatness. But he dared not despair.

He knew that when he despaired there would be nothing left. When he laid down his pen and acknowledged the futility of his labour he would be ready to die.

Sometimes at the desk in the second office of the Solicitor's suite, when his eyes travelled across the massed roofs of the city to the uneven woods that topped the far-away hills, John Marvin pictured to himself the death he would die. Through those hills stretched the muddy coils of the Potomac. Where it glided most silently, most like a huge, wise serpent, high cliffs rose up to meet the overhanging sky. John Marvin had wandered on those cliffs. After one reached their top the sky was not so near. Tall trees held it at arm's length. Standing beneath them you looked down at the mysterious, gliding river. John Marvin had looked and looked until he saw himself, a misshapen mass, on the cruel rocks that raised their sharp outlines warningly along the river's edge. Yes,

when it was determined that he could not write he would . . .

At four-thirty when he left the office he watched the horde of clerks swarming out of the Department. . . . A crowd of cockroaches issuing from an old desk. Somebody moved it and they all came running out. . . . They were unsightly and ludicrous. We killed as many of them as we could. The office is full of them.

John Marvin always saw himself as one of this ill-assorted multitude. Some of them were old, some of them were crippled, and all of them, save the very youngest ones, looked exactly what they were, failures, men and women who did little things well.

John Marvin felt his limbs drag, his shoulders stoop, his hair whiten. He imagined his eyes reflected the sickening look of failure in so many of the eyes about him. Then his thoughts reverted to the winding river and the sheer cliffs with the sharp rocks about their feet.

"'. . . And without asking whither hurried hence,'" he muttered.

Then he smiled and went home to his third-floor bedroom, his writing-table, and his racing pen.

## III

When the manuscript of his play had been returned to him for the eighth time, John Marvin sat down to face the fact that his pen promised him no deliverance from his departmental existence. He still sat at his writing-table night after night, fighting the hopelessly unequal battle between literary ideals and economic necessities, but his hope of freedom was gone.

Doing overtime in the second office of the Solicitor's suite, his eyes sought the thinly fringed hills that marred the evenness of the horizon line, and he seemed to see the dark river coiled about the base of the sheer cliffs. Always now the jagged rocks stood out prominently in the picture, and on them he could see the crumpled form of a man who had willed to rise and had terribly fallen. A breeze blowing up the river fluttered the clothing that held the mangled flesh and bones of the dead thing.

John Marvin passed an unsteady hand across his damp forehead. The air from the street was uncomfortably chill. He rose and shut the window.

In the first of the three offices a bell rang peremptorily. It rang only once. That was for the messenger. The door of the second office opened and Mr. Stead entered. He crossed the room and pushed open the door of the Solicitor's sanctum. John Marvin looked at the old man and shuddered. Which was the, worst, this or the fluttering thing on the rocks at the river's edge? He could see himself gradually passing into the semblance of Mr. Stead. For years the aged messenger had been dragging himself about the corridors of the Department, the personification of all those qualities that count for nothing except to those whose convenience they serve, and for relatively little to them. Mr. Stead was a genial man, a stupid man, hopelessly mediocre and hopelessly futile.

The mesenger came out of the private office followed by the Solicitor.

"You needn't stay any longer," volunteered the official.

The two men passed into the hall. To John Marvin there seemed to be only slight difference between them. One had failed and the other had succeeded, but what had either accomplished? What was accomplishment, anyway? Perhaps it was different things to different people—people of different makeup. Yes, it must be that. Then perhaps the Solicitor had accomplished something after all, only it was not anything that *he* was willing to call accomplishment. Doubtless what he wanted to do would not be regarded as accomplishment by the Solicitor.

Before he closed the window his eyes wandered over the crowding roofs to the unevenly bearded hills through which stretched the tortuous length of the forbidding river. Yes, he would go out and stand on those cliffs once more.

The dead thing on the rocks that the breeze played with was better off than Mr. Stead. There was little difference now between Mr. Stead and that. Mr. Stead limped around and spoke, and that only stirred when the wind rounded the curve in the river and swept along under the cliffs. To-morrow he would ask for some leave. Then he would go out and stand on those cliffs and . . .

He closed the window abruptly and pulled down the shade. That night he did no writing.

## IV

GREY clouds pressed down upon the towering pines, which repulsed them with extended arms. A buzzard described wide circles over the sullen river. Occasionally a beam of sunlight, filtered by a grim cloud into a stream of pale yellow, travelled restlessly up and down the depressing landscape.

John Marvin stood on the edge of the overhanging cliff, his arm encircling the trunk of an isolated tree. He had only to release his hold and let the weight of his body propel him a step or two forward, and settle for ever the question of his success or failure. There would be a swift, delicious fall through the resistless air, much like the sensation which sometimes immediately preceded sleep; then a dull, heavy shock. His limbs would quiver and then relax. The pale beam of sunlight would play up and down the rocky margin of the river, occasionally darting about the huddled human wreck. The breeze, rounding the lower curve of the stream, would stir the dark garments and they would flap like sullen sails in a feeble wind.

He shivered and turned back abruptly to an old fallen tree on the edge of the wood. Why was he obsessed with this desire for death? Was it after all the only alternative to success? He sat down with his elbows on his knees, his hands supporting his head. He felt weak and sick. The picture of the dead thing on the rocks came and went before his eyes. In and out, alternating with it like a cut-back in a moving picture, followed the memory of the messenger, Stead. To become a human automaton like that; to sit day after day before a typewriter tapping off letters to The Honourable, the Attorney-General. No, the thing on the rocks was preferable. He started to get up.

A frollicking breeze leaped over the edge of the cliff and whirled up a cloud of dust and papers in front of the fallen tree. John Marvin looked idly at the disturbed rubbish, the aftermath of picnics. Paper napkins, the cover of a candy box, bits of a wooden plate. What was that? He reached down and picked up the dancing strip of paper that had attracted his notice. It was a cheque.

Probably incomplete. Made a mistake and threw it away.

But his eyes detected no mistake. It was a cheque on a local bank for fifty thousand dollars, payable to an individual with a fairly ordinary name, signed by another. He turned it over. It was not endorsed. Was it possible that the owner had lost it? He looked again at its face. Then he saw. It was dated April 31, 19119. A joke. A passing pleasantry. Such nonsense as one expected of clerks on picnics.

But he remained where he was, holding the pseudo cheque in his hand, looking at it. There was something about it that held his attention. His thought refused to leave it, or rather his thought, soaring off on the wings of speculation, carried the facetious bit of paper along with it.

Suppose it were genuine, and his. Fifty thousand dollars. Even less. Twenty-five thousand dollars. Twenty thousand. Ten. Five. He wouldn't be thinking of suicide then. He wouldn't be doing overtime in the second office of the Solicitor's suite. He wouldn't be writing letters to The Honourable, the Attorney-General. He would . . .

His thought lost itself in a labyrinth

of imaginary acquisitions, comforts, luxuries, pleasures. He could leave his third-floor bedroom and take a flat. He began to select his furniture. There were books he had wanted to buy. He filled the shelves of his library. He could afford good seats at the best theatres. He would eat—at—

Suddenly he stopped and crushed the silly strip of paper as though it were an insect that had stung him. A sharp tug on the silken cord of reality had brought him out of the labyrinth, and he stood blinking stupidly at the daylight. *He wasn't thinking of his work at all!*

The realization struck John Marvin like a cold wind. It wasn't his desire to create that had gone dancing off in ecstasy at the thought of possessing a few thousands. It was his *desire to be comfortable.* He wanted comfort and luxury and pleasure. In his mental acquisition of these his work, his art, had been utterly forgotten.

It was for this then that he had been torturing himself. It was not failure, actual failure, that he feared. It was discomfort, the withholding of the things that came to those who made money. It was not the strength or weakness of his pen that he had been thinking of. It was only how long he would have to work in the Department, how long he would have to occupy a third-floor bedroom. It was not the fear of artistic but that of financial failure which had become an obsession with him.

He recalled the figure of the old messenger, Stead. Why had he allowed it to depress him so? He knew now. It was not because Mr. Stead had been passing up and down the corridors of the Department for so many years. It was because Mr. Stead was poor.

And this was his pride in his work! This was his enthusiasm for what he believed to be his art! It was for this that he had been furiously writing night after night, in order that he might have a softer cushion, a more elaborate meal, better seats at the theatre, finer clothes. It was not an artist's zeal. It was a small man's covetousness, the sloth of the mediocre.

John Marvin opened his clenched hand and let the crumpled ball of paper fall back among the picnickers' débris. He rose and walked slowly to the edge of the cliff. The jagged rocks on which he had pictured the lifeless thing, its garments fluttering in the breeze, smiled up at him drily. The river, more than ever like a wise serpent, glided silently around the base of the cliff. Where a stray sunbeam fell upon its gently undulating surface, it seemed to John Marvin as though the huge reptile slowly closed and opened one large eye.

## V

THAT evening John Marvin sat at the table in his third-floor bedroom writing. His pen travelled unhurriedly over the paper. Like the tortoise in the old fable, it seemed confident of winning the race, of arriving first at the goal of achievement.

WHEN a girl to whom you have made intermittent love for months lets you see her in her kimono, it means one of two things—either a last desperate play to win you, or that she has decided to marry someone else.

# ATTRACTIVENESS

By John F. Lord

SHE was neither beautiful, vivacious nor clever. She hadn't a compelling personality. She wasn't rich. She lacked social distinction. It was extremely difficult to tell what attracted him to her. Perhaps it was merely because she was some other man's wife.

# IF I WERE KING

By John McClure

IF I were king of Egypt
Then might I give ye gold,
And red wine, and white wine,
And heirlooms old.

If I were king of Fairyland
Then might I make ye glee
With white bread, and brown bread,
And elfin trinketry.

But I'm no king—nonnay! nonnay!
Dull ass, to whom belongs
Only his breeches and his bray
And these uncomely songs.

EVERY man has to believe in something. Sometimes it is a god; sometimes it is a woman; sometimes it is a scheme for putting a kick into grape-juice.

A MAN first falls in love and then thinks of marriage. A woman first figures out the marriage and then falls in love.

THE greatest friendship is found between two people who understand and respect each other's dishonesty.

# THE LAST LOVE

By John C. Cavendish

## I

ROUX beckoned us to the veranda railing, and, leaning against a column crowned with Ionic volutes, he pointed off through the woods. The trees concealed the bulk of the structure, but we could make out the tiled roof and the gables of that sinister house.

We stared at it earnestly, profoundly interested, knowing it to be the place where Rolf Jesty had spent his last days. The memory of that man fascinated the imaginations of all of us.

In a true sense he had been an international character, so much a cosmopolite that his origin has been lost sight of. An American? Perhaps. No one had ever thought to label him. It was impossible to fix a nationality upon his unique and strangely dominating personality.

Even the memoirs of Madame Bourrell, intimate as they were—and frequently uncomfortably frank—had not served to do more than throw a dubious light upon his character. The memory of her months with Jesty had been too much for her. She sentimentalized over her recollections. But one thing she revealed; he had dominated her as thoroughly as he had dominated all others.

"To-morrow," said Roux, "if any of you fellows intend to get up in the morning, I'll drive you over to see that house; I can even take you through it. The keys have been left with me. No doubt it will surprise you. Or will it be what you expected?"

We sought chairs on the veranda. Roux would surely tell us everything. Without the expectation of his revelation he could have persuaded few of us to leave the city; certainly I would never have come by the simple bait of his hospitality. It was our mutual interest in Jesty that gathered us there.

Now Roux, disdaining a chair, seated himself on the railing and ran his fingers through his picturesquely disordered hair.

"Yes, it will surprise you," he went on, "because it shows so little the effect of that curious girl. There's scarcely a reminiscence of her in the house, the chairs, the pictures, the rugs, the books, even that elaborate garden. Yet he had it built for her, he brought all those things out here for her. The last love of Rolf Jesty! And she wasn't without her own personality, either. . . ."

A voice came out from one of the wicker chairs.

"How did she impress you, Roux—I mean when you first saw her?"

He looked at his questioner intently, with the expression of one who recalls significant images from days that have spent their hours.

"As a tantalizing mood—as almost the symbol of a mood," he said. "Yes, she had a separate personality of her own. It's my conviction that is the key of the tragedy. Jesty never discovered it. He imposed his own personality as ruthlessly as he was used to. It may have been she was brooding upon that when I first saw her.

"It was in those woods you were looking through a moment ago. Just about noon. Not more than two weeks after she and Jesty had come out here. Up until that time I had seen nothing of him at all. Of course you must re-

member that prior to his living here, there had been no sort of intimacy between us. In that affair in Chile, whilst I was still with our legation, I had been able to do him a few favours. Perhaps I had talked with him as long as half an hour, if you'd lump all our conversations into one.

"She was standing quite idly, near a slender poplar tree. It was the proper setting for her—a young, slender thing herself. I guessed her identity at once—the surprising girl Jesty had married."

"Married?"

Roux glanced in the direction of the incredulous one among us.

"You doubt that part of the story?" he asked. "Yet it's true. Jesty made no secret of having married her. It was easily verified. People simply chose not to believe it, that's all. They imagined it wasn't in keeping with his character. As a matter of fact, it was exactly in keeping. Even Jesty must have had some secret premonition that he wouldn't last for ever, that he was growing older. I am convinced that he believed himself old enough to indulge that last adventure.

"Well, as I say, she was standing near that slender tree with no purpose at all. I mean, no physical purpose. A mood doesn't need a physical purpose. At that moment she was expressing a mood.

"She raised her eyes and looked at me, a full gaze with no surprise. Yet her eyes still retained the expression of brooding that found, moreover, a more general outlet, that seemed to proceed from her entire figure, from the lax droop of her sloping shoulders, the flexion of her arms and idle hands, from even the slight backward wave of her black hair. I knew who she was at once, and I smiled at her.

"'We are neighbours, I believe,' I said. 'To a certain extent I'm not an entire stranger either. You'll find that Mr. Jesty probably remembers me—we met some years ago. I've been waiting until you were more settled to call.'

"She continued to look at me, without any curiosity, without any evidence of interest. It seemed impossible for her to come out of her preoccupation. She said nothing, acknowledging my words with only the slightest nod of her head, up and down once or twice and then relapsing into motionless languor.

"But this gave me no feeling of embarrassment. Curiously enough, you never felt embarrassed with her. She was always too remote and therefore too impersonal.

"I took the opportunity then to scrutinize her face, which was certainly not a usual one. Her most striking feature was the arched line of her brows—two swift black brush-strokes, rising up obliquely from the slender bridge of her nose. The eyes below were large, but the lids drooped over them languorously, half concealing the greenish brown pupils. This was not a gentle face, although the lips were quite full and composed. It was a significant countenance, significant of some inner qualities, a fervour, an expectation, or even a disappointment, that were not readily comprehended. She was the next to speak, surprising me with a sudden question.

"'Where do you live?' she asked.

"Her voice was a little unsympathetic, a little harsh, although the tone was full enough and round enough.

"I pointed through the trees.

"'You can make out a little of the house from here. Not far.'

"She followed my pointing finger with a brief, indifferent glance, and then questioned me again.

"'How did you know me?' she asked.

"I smiled a little.

"'There are not so many people in this region. We recognize a stranger immediately. Of course, you might have been any stranger, but there was something that suggested Mr. Jesty at once. . . .'

"She astonished me by contracting her arched brows into an instant frown. Her lips narrowed somewhat. I felt uncomfortable; in some way I had

managed to displease her. This seemed strange because, quickly recalling my words, I could perceive nothing offensive in them.

"'Have I begun to *look* like him?' she asked.

"The subdued vehemence of her query, the stress she put upon the syllables, astonished me.

"But I vaguely understood; her sentence brought a measure of revealment. It seems I almost lost my aplomb, inferences crowded into my perceptions so swiftly. No doubt my eyes widened considerably, but she did not notice. She began to pull idly at the leaves of the underbrush; a moment later she took a step away from me.

"'Come and see us, if you want to,' she said.

"I watched her move away slowly, with her gliding walk, that made very little sound in the leaves and moss.

"So there was an antagonism! That was plain enough. And to a measure, probably not very full in that instant, I comprehended its nature.

"Think what a dominant man this Jesty was! Dominant without words, subtly so, dominant by the sheer strength of his personality. You met him, he overwhelmed you, provided you had intelligence enough to feel him. You were at a disadvantage, you felt belittled.

"And then there was the girl's personality. Jesty was a very perceiving man and no one would deny that he was clever enough to make sharp distinctions between different people. Yet the force of the man, the domination of the man, never achieved any distinctions. I knew at once that he was approaching this woman with his unvaried assurance of ascendancy. She was to be moulded to him, to his wishes, to his aims, to his unspoken purposes. I stood there in the woods, staring after her with a vibrant, profound interest. Suppose she were in rebellion!"

Roux shifted his seat on the railing and stared at us all with an expression of exultation, as if that memory of his discovery still retained something of its power to thrill his satisfied curiosity.

"All you fellows," he went on, "recall some of the circumstances of Jesty's meeting with the girl and some of the circumstances that led up to his marriage. Just bring back those recollections in a little more detail.,

"You remember of course that curious Jarman woman—the only woman, I really believe, who ever received any considerable part of Jesty's confidences—and incidentally the only woman who seemed to preserve, successfully, all of her own personality in the face of that man's prevailing character. They must have known each other for years. Whenever he arrived in New York, he was certain to go and see her. You would observe them in some restaurant together, talking very amicably; the old lady would shake her finger admonishingly at Jesty and he tolerated that mannerism like a subdued schoolboy. It was just about two years ago now that Jesty met the girl in the Jarman woman's home. . . .

"It was his first visit after a prolonged absence, his first visit since the South American affair where I had the . . . the . . . shall I say good luck? . . . to meet him. He never wrote letters. No doubt he considered words inadequate. He came in very unexpectedly, entered the living room, and found Mrs. Jarman and the girl together.

"Of course she gave him a cordial greeting and then introduced Estelle.

"'My niece,' she said.

"He bowed over the girl's hand; she did not smile; she met his gaze with a searching expression and the greenish glints of those brown eyes must have been a little unfathomable.

"They all took chairs and the two friends began to talk; the girl contributed nothing to their conversation. She sat in silence, looking from one to the other, but more often she paid no attention to either of them.

"On that first meeting, I am certain, she exhibited her customary attitude of

self-sufficient aloofness. It was as if some inner drama absorbed all that girl's attention, making her indifferent to the externals of her environment. She could be startlingly immobile.

"Afterward, when they were alone, Jesty questioned the old lady.

"'I never knew you had a niece,' he said.

"'You've heard me speak of my sister?' she questioned.

"'Yes—she lives in France?'

"'She did . . .'

"He raised his brows a little in understanding.

"'So far as I know,' said Mrs. Jarman, 'she's dead. We had no communication for years—a difference of temperament. I never saw this girl before she came here. Perhaps she's not my niece at all—but then, I have no especial reason to doubt her. It doesn't matter anyway. A very curious girl. One that you're going to stay away from.'

"It was a sort of a threat, and it was backed up by the Jarman woman's determined vigilance.

"Not that Jesty displayed any eagerness to become intimate with Estelle. He seemed quite indifferent to her. For the next six months they never had five minutes' conversation alone together. Was Mrs. Jarman trying to protect the girl?—or was she, with a singularly subtle insight, a foreseeing intuition, endeavouring to shield Jesty himself?

"That last hypothesis seems a little ludicrous, but you can't be sure. She was a penetrating woman, and she must have understood the girl's character fairly well.

"But her sudden death altered the situation. The girl continued to live in the same house—all the old lady's property went to her. Now you began to see Estelle and Jesty together.

"At first it was only an occasional glimpse as they rode about in his car. Then they appeared in restaurants, the theatres, the opera.

"They were never an ordinary looking pair. She seemed frail at the side of Jesty until you scrutinized her more particularly and then a certain strength of her own was revealed. It was the strength of silence, the power of that strange, inner absorption.

"Only occasionally, and then solely in the early days of their companionship, would you find her regarding that remarkable man as a being with whom she had any intimate concern.

"Her look then—those occasional looks—were arresting enough, however; I am sure of that. The large eyes would widen, the pale face would flush a little and her features would assume a rapt significance, as if she contemplated a beloved vision. How incredibly romantic she was! How appalling was her simplicity, a simplicity of wanting that made her unique and rare! Jesty never understood . . .

"But her silences, her unfathomed brooding, her uncomprehended aloofness determined his complete interest. He wanted her. That was enough for him; it sufficed, without any formality of her own consent.

"There was only one difficulty. Her lack of the usual eagerness, the ordinary response, puzzled him in the matter of her possession. No doubt, aside from the allure of a new experience, we discover here his reason for marrying her. It was the only way open; it was a single, conclusive act that would assert his right and his dominance."

## II

ROUX paused once more and drew in a deep breath.

"I'm giving you this," he said, "in a much more connected manner than I was able to gather it. A large part of what I have said is constructed from inferences, from snatches of words—but reliable enough—coming to me after they moved out here.

"My curiosity was large enough to lead me to my first call shortly after I had met Estelle in the woods. I ascended the steps of their veranda

with some uncertainty as to my reception.

"A man-servant took me into the hall—a white hall with a turning flight of stairs going up in back; white balustrades and gold figures; somewhat glaring, very decorative, and perhaps the only part of that house that pleased the girl or was in consonance with her individuality.

"Jesty himself suddenly appeared through the curtains of the living room at the side. He recognized me at once, and it seemed that Estelle had told him of meeting me.

"He was unexpectedly cordial; he shook hands warmly.

"'Come in here,' he said. 'We usually sit in here.'

"I preceded him through the clinging silk of the curtains and there was the girl, languorous in a deep chair, heavy-lidded, and indifferent. She scarcely rose to greet me. She looked extraordinarily exotic in the curious setting of that room.

"A most inappropriate room—for her. Imagine her spending hours with Jesty among all those weapons, to which she was utterly indifferent. He had every kind of firearm imaginable arranged around the walls of that apartment. The bulk of his collection, in fact: old Spanish pistols with ornate silver handles, Chaffe, Berdan, Chassepot beech-loaders, the oldest weapons and the newest, and all of them, wherever possible, charged and ready to shoot. Picture Jesty creating a room like that in the house he built, ostensibly, for her!

"During my short visit the girl practically ignored me. Not that it was not an ignoring of a character that could offend anyone of my sort. It was a . . . a— total abstraction. She ignored Jesty quite as much. But he was entirely calm. He took her for granted, took her interest for granted, took her acquiescence for granted—and even, I suppose, her love.

"He spoke to me about his plans.

"'I don't know how long we'll stay here,' he said. 'No doubt I'll get tired of this soon enough. That means we'll doubtless go to Europe. Wherever I decide.'

"'—and Mrs. Jesty,' I added, rather rashly.

"He stared a moment as if my words had been uttered in an unknown and uncomprehended tongue.

"'Oh . . . yes,' he murmured, finally.

"I was glad to get out of that atmosphere. It was too full of uncomfortable suggestion, of a complex suggestion that eluded my understanding. That room gave one the unaccountable impression of being highly charged; it produced upon me the effect you might expect, the emotional response you might predict for yourself, were you to be given an infernal machine to take apart and examine.

"But going down the steps from the house, I was paradoxically sorry to have left. The pair interested me beyond decent reason. And I began to see Jesty a little more closely, and found myself admiring him.

"What a colossal assurance resided in that man! He revealed no doubts about his strange companion; it was obvious that he was convinced of her plasticity, of his ability to mould her to his aims, to his purposes, to his plans—whatever they were. What did Jesty want with her anyway?

"Looking back, it seems to me now that the man was exhibiting the initial declination of his powers, a slight foreshadowing of approaching age. I suspect now that he had no well-defined hopes in her, but approached her because of a habit, his habit of dominating women. He saw her; she piqued him; and he could not resist.

"At this time I was considerably at a loss how to proceed. There was no good reason for making another call. They did not return my call. And yet, I wanted to see them very much indeed. As it happened, Estelle herself came to me.

"It was early one morning; I had walked out on the porch here before breakfast.

"Across the lawn, where you see that bed of yellow gardenias, I saw her stooping. She had a flower cupped in her slender hands and was inhaling the fragrance of it in deep breaths. Half her face was turned to my scrutiny and in her unawareness of observation her countenance assumed a revealing form that startled me like a momentous discovery.

"She seemed, in that trivial act of smelling a flower, to achieve an expression of profound passion, of pent emotion that flowed from her aboundingly, like a visible outpouring. And with this there was commingled a wanting, no less exuberant, but touching, but pathetic.

"A risky determination came into my mind.

"I crossed the veranda and ran down the steps. She did not notice me until I was almost upon her.

"She heard my step at last and straightened up suddenly; the expression of her face underwent a swift change.

"It was as if she had achieved a palpable withdrawal of all those emotions that a moment before had overlaid her face like a visible aura. Her parted lips closed, without compression, but with that faintly drooping, almost sullen line so common to their ordinary aspect.

"'Excuse me,' she murmured.

"'You don't have to be excused,' I said. 'You're welcome here any time you want to come. I'm glad you like those flowers. I don't pay much attention to them myself. But if you want some of them, I'll dig up a few of the plants and bring them over to you.'

"'Yes, I like them,' she said.

"It was evident that she did not intend to be any more cordial, or any more communicative than before. I renewed my determination. I looked at her very earnestly.

"'You said something to me,' I told her, 'that first day I met you in the woods, that greatly aroused my interest. It was unexpected, and its inferences have almost possessed me. To be plain, it was the last sentence you found time to say to me. You asked me, very vehemently, and very curiously: "Have I begun to *look* like him."'

"There was the dawn of the faintest surprise on her face, expressed in a slight widening of her drooping lids, an almost immeasurable trivial rise of her arched, jet brows. Her slim body seemed to sway forward a trifle.

"Her eyes met my own; her lips parted.

"'Why are you interested in me?' she asked.

"The question was profoundly satisfying. Then I had made some progress! She was beginning to talk!

"'Good!' I exclaimed. 'Then you know that I am interested. Yes, extremely. I'm interested in both of you. I haven't any excuse for my curiosity either, except that a sufficient provocation will arouse the most incurious one. You are provoking . . .'

"She dropped her eyes. Watching her face with the most intimate examination, I thought the corners of her lips turned up into the ghost of a smile.

"'A moment ago I came out and caught you . . .'

"At these words she stiffened a little; the vaporous smile vanished.

"What do you mean?'

"'I couldn't help it,' I said, 'and I must be forgiven. I didn't know you were here. I saw you bending over those flowers, caressing them in fact, and there was an expression on your face that was a revelation to me—'

"I was paused by the startling, the sudden opening of her arresting eyes.

"'No doubt you've found out something that *he* never will,' she said. 'Well—what did *he* want with me? Why did he take me? *An old man—just like you . . .*'

"It will be difficult for you fellows to imagine the profundity of scorn that her inflection made out of that word old! Jesty an old man! Like me!

"A real sympathy for the man came to me in those seconds. This was his last woman and with his last woman he

suffered his first disaster. He had no magic for her, and he was powerless to play with those fingers that had in former years touched the chords of response so often, upon this strange, young instrument.

"She had dropped her face again and the old half-sullen withdrawal lay over her features like an impermeable veil.

"'There is no advice I can give to you,' I said.

"'Of course there isn't.'

"The response was immediate. She retained her immobility for a moment and then turned to go.

"'I'll take some of these plants if you have time to bring them over,' she said.

"'This afternoon,' I called after her.

"She did not answer me, she did not acknowledge my words.

"I watched her as she crossed the lawn, languorous in her progress and, like a revelation, it appeared to me, extraordinarily and fatally romantic!

## III

"THE conviction of her romantic simplicity came to me, as I have said, as a revelation. And it was a conviction. However elusive she might be in the minutiæ of her character, now, she was fundamentally comprehended. Her brooding hours, her inner absorption—the astounding preoccupation with her visions of romance!

"In the passionate simplicity of her wanting, that made her above all else unique, what gothic dreams of astounding glamour she must have created! Ah, the tragic dreams of youth; the expectancy; the prospect of glamour—and the moving and pathetic certainty of unfulfilment! She went away across that lawn like an impossible wraith, making a demand upon life too incredible for the terms of actuality.

"That afternoon I took the plants over to her. She met me in her customary way; she was almost sullen in the few words she spoke. Why not? What had *I* to give her—or *Jesty*, who was also present?

"Jesty stood near her while we talked together. Once during the brief conversation, he touched her on the arm. At that moment my eyes happened to rest on her face.

"Across the indifference and abstraction of her features there came something else, a stirring and profound emotion whose startling significance was made known to me in those revealing instants. It was a coming out of her abstraction; it was a direct response to Jesty.

"It was then that I had my first intimation of a fear for him. Plainly, she had passed out of the quiescent condition of ignoring him. His touch moved her; his nearness set her into vibration. And—it was the response of a developing hate . . ."

Roux paused again, but only for an instant. He saw that we were all attending him. He retained his same intent attitude on the porch rail, but bent a little closer to our figures in the wicker chairs.

"The last day," he said, "presents the clearest picture of all. I suppose I forced myself upon those people abominably—still, Jesty never complained. The girl was too remote from me to care. But there are certain dramas that must be watched, certain curiosities too strong for the restraint of the customary proprieties.

"My habit was to appear there several times a week. Usually in the afternoon. When we were not outdoors, we always met in that room full of guns, incongruous guns. Incongruous? Perhaps, for the inscrutable purpose of life, not so incongruous . . .

"On this final afternoon we had talked as usual in the room that held Jesty's grim collection. Estelle was in an unusual mood. More than ordinarily talkative. Indeed, she was almost vivacious—using her former aspects as the basis of comparison. She achieved the miracle of small talk. Her eyes were less drooping, her manner less in the condition of remote languor.

"When I arose to go, she stood up, too. Jesty, assured, sardonic, dominating, also came out of his chair and took

a position opposite her, across a little table that separated them. I saw her turn her face and rest her eyes upon his countenance.

"At that moment I had no opportunity for the analysis of her expression, but one thing struck me forcibly: she seemed, in that instant itself, to have come to some sort of a determination. As I left the room, her lips were faintly compressed and her eyes were extraordinarily large.

"I went out through the hall and descended the steps from the porch leisurely enough. I continued toward the woods, that separate the two houses. I had gone fifty yards, perhaps, when I heard the shot.

"I knew it came from the house. More than that, I knew it came from that room. An understanding that refused to articulate itself into comprehensible words flashed into my mind.

"I stopped dead still—but only for a moment.

"Turning then, I ran back toward the house.

"The room was full of a pungent smoke. Jesty was lying face up on the floor and the little table, overturned, one of the legs snapped in two, half concealed his body.

"Estelle stood motionless near the wall, almost in the exact spot where I had left her a moment before. I remembered now that she had only to reach up in order to remove the silver-handled pistol from its hook.

"And when I came in our eyes met in the fog that lay over the sinister room. They met in an instant of complete comprehension; she knew that I understood. She did not utter a word; there was no sound in the room.

"What may astonish you fellows is that I myself had no surprise, that all this seemed the inevitable ending, the terribly proper conclusion. What else was to be expected from that silent, passionate girl? Hadn't Jesty to pay—in the reasoning of her astounding romantic simplicity—for the theft of her life, for the taking of her from any fulfilment of her dreams, of her gothic dreams, powerless to give a single instant of thrill to the desires of her ardent youth? Her desires . . . that no one could fulfil . . ."

## IV

"But tell us, Roux, how in the world was she acquitted?"

"At the trial? A reasonable enough question. But she was. The defence was that he had attacked her—perfectly preposterous of course. No evidence of that. She didn't even go on the stand. But what other outcome would you expect from a jury of these parts? Jesty had utterly ignored all these people. They felt their inferiority, too. That means that they were envious—always the result of a conviction of inferiority. These yokels were not going to do any justice for that dead man."

"And where is she?" was the question.

"I don't know," said Roux. "Disappeared after the trial. You might have asked me what she is doing—I could have answered that. Evolving her absurd and tragic dreams, of course. I don't believe you sense the immeasurable romanticism of that girl. A woman of her sort will always dream. It is, in a way of speaking, her doom."

A WISE man does not tell his girl that she is the only girl he ever kissed. He tells her that she is the most interesting.

# MONNA

## AN UNFINISHED PORTRAIT

### By F. P. Delgado

NOTWITHSTANDING other and perhaps more personal considerations that her memory so often hauntingly evokes, she is associated very largely in my mind with a question of environment, specifically so because the city in which it was my privilege to know her did not seem the locality to which she really belonged and where one instinctively would seek to find her.

I met her in Paris, where she was studying art and where, concerned in other seemingly more important interests, I was indifferently conscious of her gracious presence. Later on, in Florence, the city of her birth, I was all too keenly aware of her absence and of my former insensibility. And it is in this endeavour constantly to visualize her, not where she was but where she ought to have been, that her portrait is always in a state of progression, and yet—in the very nature of things—never finally achieved.

The memory is perhaps both psychological and symbolic. The psychology is concerned with the unusual influence of propinquity, the careless indifference when there was occasion to be otherwise, the realization and the regret when the same opportunity later so devoutly desired was no longer present. And the symbolism lies in the subtle knowledge that the Tuscan city asleep on the Arno lacked by reason of her absence the one thing that prevented the fulfilment and completion of its beauty, that it would always slumber on unless she to whom it had given part of its soul in birth should return and awaken it into the larger joyousness of the day.

Her name of Monna, singularly odd yet attractive, seemed peculiarly appropriate. I am unaware of its significance, other than she rejoiced in it and it in her. Browning was once tempted to learn a certain melodious language on account of a rose with its soft, meandering Spanish name.

Yet I had a far better incentive to study Italian. But I have made no progress in a speech both half awake and half asleep. Perhaps it is because I have been too busy seeking to paint a portrait to take the necessary time to study the rippling syllable with which its title should be suitably fixed.

Although I met and knew her in Paris, I saw her but rarely there, not over a dozen times at the most, and never alone. I can recall having tea with her in her apartments in the Rue de l'Université, at the Lyceum Club and at the villa of the Princess M. at St. Cloud. We met elsewhere as well—in the studio of Mme. Mérignac, the most distinguished of women medallists in France; at the Musée de Balzac; and once at a concert to hear a celebrated Russian pianist interpret Chopin.

Perhaps among the few rare occasions that it was my privilege to be in her society, the one that lurks most vividly in my memory was a certain evening in the house of a mutual friend in the Rue de Vaugirard.

A few guests had been invited to hear one of the younger French Poets, one of the leaders of *La Poétique* move-

ment, recite his verses. She arrived somewhat late, and I remember even now the incidents of her entrance as she crossed the threshold of the *salon*, dressed simply yet beautifully in black, bare of arms and throat, a slight, girlish hesitancy in her graceful movements, yet withal a certain poise, a certain sureness, a tacit recognition of the homage due to a fine tradition.

She was very beautiful that night. To say how or why would be superfluous, for such considerations at best are only matters of relativity. Yet the blue-grey eyes with their eager, questioning regard, the mass of blonde hair tastefully and simply arranged, the fine and delicate contour of the throat and shoulders, the youth and cadence of her figure, made a picture ineffably sweet and unforgettable.

It was my pleasure to sit beside her during the all too fleeting hours of that memorable evening. In comparison everything else sank into insignificance. I cannot even recall the nature of the verses recited by the poet. They seemed so artificial in contrast to what was so wonderfully real.

I tried to question her concerning her art work and studies, but she was very reticent in speaking of her aspirations and ambitions—a few flashing and illuminating bits of criticism on the methods of the different schools, a casual reference or two concerning her classes and *croquis* and that was all.

Yet she was quite interested in my own work, loath as I was to tell her about it. She was curious about life, a fine and sane curiosity. Intuitively she arrived at its conclusions by an unerring yet simple knowledge of its threads. It is a rare art that few possess—the embroidery of life, spun and fashioned by a sure selection of its many varied weaves.

We conversed in English, which she spoke perfectly. She had lived in England and she loved it, especially the counties of Suffolk and Surrey and the allurement of the English downs.

Then we spoke of the student life of Paris, the happy and often irresponsible career of those who are attracted to the great city like moth to a flame. She knew nothing of the obvious side of that life. It did not appeal to her. I doubt if she had ever set foot in Lavenue's, the gay resort so dear to the hearts of the art students of the Montparnasse quarter. She belonged rather to that army of serious, quiet workers whose numbers are greater than the casual visitor to Paris would ever suspect. For life there does not always mean the laughter and the lights of Bohemia. They are part of it, it is true, but only a small part. Thus she pursued her daily tasks, happy in her work, eager in the study and contemplation of the wonderful things that lay ready at her hand, with a devotion to a noble ideal, and with a faith serene and confident in the morrow.

Thus I knew her, casually and not intimately, and I did not realize the significance of it all. Happiness often assumes many strange disguises, passes us unawares in the night season. Perhaps it is because we sometimes lack the vision to penetrate beyond the veil and we see only when it is too late.

## II

And yet in a strange and subtle way I began to know her intimately when later I was in Florence and she was absent still in France. Many months, too, had elapsed. And I began to interpret the city by reason of her, to regard it in terms of personality.

There was a reciprocal relationship also. The city enabled me really to understand her. It has been very truly said that the excess of beauty of the Tuscan city causes a kind of intoxication that inhibits achievement. I felt that very keenly. One might dream there eternally. I doubt very much if a great thing could ever be accomplished there. In the past it was different.

During the Renaissance it was a city of energy, where countless forces converged, intellectual and otherwise. Today there remains only the dream. And while it is true that every great thing

has a vision somewhere back of it, it is also just as true that no dream can ever be realized unless it is built upon something tangible and real.

I felt that there could be no achievement there, either for the city or myself, while she was absent. So by a method of specious casuistry I began to visualize her, to give to the dream its reality, to awaken the great iron-barred Tuscan *palazzi* from their long and heavy slumber.

And the visualization of a fine memory was not difficult, because there were visible aids and silent testimony to it on every hand. I found it especially in the wonderful canvases of Botticelli, because, somehow, she seemed the real and tangible expression of what the great artist of the Renaissance had so truly glimpsed and anticipated. Perhaps it was because his Venuses and especially his Madonnas, so unusual in mediæval art, were blonde. What exalted and specific claim the brunette has to that subtle honour I am unaware. I know a certain blonde Madonna of Sassoferato in Rome that I would not exchange for all the dark daughters of Eve.

And the subtle relationship was not alone primarily concerned with colour that Botticelli's paintings brought her thus so vividly to mind. It was also because the haunting charm of his graceful women bore, like she, a look of silent inquiry on their eager faces. Their expression is that of the wistfulness of exiles, *deracinées*, as the French appropriately characterize it. And she, true to that same tradition, remained in Paris, in the Rue de l'Université, a far cry from all these Florentine fancies. I wonder sometimes if Botticelli did not dimly anticipate her in a dream, because he too was a visionary with all the alert sense of outward things.

And there was another sense of similarity besides that of art that made me think of her so often in this Old World city. It was concerned chiefly with nature and was largely pagan in character. Often I used to imagine that I would come upon her somewhere by chance among the charming environs of the town, a wayside divinity met casually upon the high road or along the little byways, the spirit of the forest to be suddenly encountered amidst the perfect silence of its trees.

I felt this especially at Vallombrosa, among its orchards and its vineyards, up among the olive-clad heights of Fiesole, at Monte Ceceri with the wonder of the Val d'Arno asleep in the haze beneath, and perhaps best of all at Settignano with its tall and slender cypresses and the slow winding road that led down through a tangle of woods past the Castel di Poggio and the little church of Santa Maria a Vincigliata.

At every gap in the trees, at every purple shadow cast upon the hard, white road, I half expected to find her, a wood nymph, the incentive, no doubt, that once fleetingly caught in a beam of sunlight had prompted Sandro to paint her on the canvas, in order to fix there for ever the dear image that he hoped some time to meet again.

Yet in the hush and silence of the forest there seemed ever an inexpressible wistfulness and longing, as though it too awaited, calmly and patiently, the return of the soul that had slipped away and whose memory lingered now only in the plaintive call of the nightingales or was revealed sometimes in the strange, fantastic shapes of the blue-black shadows of the cypresses.

And if she thus dwelt in the spirit of the woods that clustered the hills above the city, she seemed also to reside mysteriously in the presence of its roofs and spires—over the towers of the Duomo, the Campanile and of the Palazzo Vecchio, in the restful green of the Boboli Gardens, upon the Ponte Santa Trinita and the Ponte Vecchio beneath which the sluggish Arno creeps haltingly and peacefully to the sea.

And thus regarding the beauty and mysticism of it all, the crenelated piles and graceful towers over which her spirit seemed to brood, I thought of the chance meeting in Paris and what it had meant in after days. At the time I regarded it only as a trifle, a Tuscan trifle,

and life is full of such. It is only when trifles become tremendous, as they sometimes do, that their real significance becomes apparent.

I daresay to her this meeting meant no more than a brief and casual recognition on the highway of life, to be forgotten and put aside in the further experience of other and more definite things. But to me it meant and still means much more than that. That Lady Fortune who dwells at Actium and of whom Horace so often sang, rarely bestows the same gift twice. So I shall in all probability never meet her again. Yet the memory lives, and sometimes troubles. And I wish her always a life as bright and smiling as her own blue Tuscan skies.

Accordingly, it seems that I am always eternally seeking to paint her portrait, patiently and lovingly, and not in brilliant colours, for memory always portrays itself in faint and timid hues, with a feeling of softness and of atmosphere, a suggestion only of the great line. It is a labour of love without love's reward—line upon line, tint upon tint, a dim distance seen imperfectly through falling rain. There is hesitation always as well, never that sureness were the model of to-day. And it is a hesitancy born of a certain fear, intangible and hardly capable of expression.

The fear lurks in the belief that I am painting yesterday's portrait only. Has she changed, and would she recognize her picture in the transition that time must have wrought in her? Has life, the greater artist, fashioned her in sharper relief, fantastic decoration possibly usurping the silver-grey background, the surprises of detail arrogating to themselves the impressionistic mass? In a word, is she different in life than on the canvas, or is she still the same and has life simply completed what I have timidly begun?

For life is like colour in one respect. It often retains its insistent sharpness, softened a little, perhaps, by time, yet with the underlying hues freshly and vividly retained. Some day I shall return to Florence, merely to see whether the terra-cotta medallions of della Robbia, set in the facade and between the colonnades of the Spedali degli Innocenti, or hanging on the walls of the Bargello, still hold their cool and brilliant blues.

# JOY

By Jessie B. Rittenhouse

NOW I can sing of happy things
And let the sad world go its way,
Since you have spoken words that turn
The night to day.

Now I can sow beside all streams
And care not if another reap,
Since all that I would garner here
Is mine to keep.

Now I can scatter joy about
Like green young leaves that fall in spring,
Because the tree is all too rich
In bourgeoning!

# PETIT PIERRE

By Henri Allorge

LE petit Pierre était un de ces enfants qui semblent maudits dès avant leur naissance.

Sa mère jouait, sans talent, sur une scène de troisième ou de quatrième ordre. C'était une femme qu'on méprisait, même dans le monde peu rigoriste des théâtres. Quant à son père, il n'en avait pas, étant le fils du hasard.

L'actrice avait accueilli sa naissance comme une catastrophe et lui gardait une haine que rien ne devait adoucir; elle ne pouvait lui pardonner d'être venu au monde, bien malgré lui, pourtant.

Mis en nourrice chez des gens égoïstes et durs, il avait, par quelque mystère, persisté à vivre, sans savoir pourquoi ni comment, certes; car la vie n'était pour lui, déjà, qu'une suite de souffrances. Il ne se rappelait, de cette époque sombre, que ses longues conversations avec le chien de garde qui lui léchait doucement les mains, en le regardant avec des yeux pleins d'une caresse humide, comme s'il eût été un grand frère qui ne parlât pas.

Plus tard, sa mère l'avait repris. Il n'en était pas plus heureux. Il restait le plus souvent, soit à la maison, soit chez une vieille voisine à laquelle sa mère le confiait lorsque la présence de l'enfant pouvait être gênante, ce qui arrivait souvent. Cette voisine avait pris Pierre en amabilité; elle le soignait, le lavait, lui donnait à manger, ce que la mère oubliait parfois, et s'ingéniait à lui rendre l'existence moins triste.

Pierre l'aimait bien; mais il sentait que l'affection d'une étrangère ne pouvait remplacer celle d'une mère.

Quelquefois, cependant, la sienne le faisait sortir; elle l'emmenait le plus souvent au Luxembourg ou aux Tuileries. Elle l'habillait, ces jours-là, de costumes de coupe prétentieuse et de couleurs voyantes, qu'il endossait sans joie; il s'apercevait bien que sa mère ne faisait pas cela pour son plaisir à lui, et que les passants le regardaient avec plus de surprise que d'admiration. Quelques-uns même souriaient et avaient l'air de se moquer de lui; d'autres semblaient le plaindre. Il était mal à l'aise dans ses beaux habits et aurait bien voulu les ôter.

Souvent il s'écartait de sa mère. Ce n'était pas difficile, elle faisait si peu attention à lui; et pendant qu'elle causait en riant avec des messieurs très élégants, Pierre allait retrouver d'autres petits garçons.

— Est-ce que ta maman t'aime, disait-il à l'un d'eux.

— Oh! oui, et papa aussi m'aime bien.

Pierre soupirait et réfléchissait. Qu'était-ce qu'un papa? Il se le demandait en vain. Pourquoi n'en avait-il pas, lui? Pourquoi semblait-on le repousser? Car presque toujours quelqu'un accourait vivement et emmenait ses petits interlocuteurs, en les grondant.

Et, parfois, un enfant vêtu tout de noir lui répondait à voix basse des choses que de nouveau il ne comprenait pas, et qui l'attristaient, sans qu'il sût pourquoi:

— Mon papa est parti pour un grand voyage.

Pierre s'en allait, rêveur. Est-ce que son papa était aussi parti en voyage? Pourquoi ne l'habillait-on pas aussi de noir, alors, au lieu de l'affubler de choses étranges qui le faisaient ressembler à une poupée? Pourquoi ne lui parlait-on jamais de ce papa, qui l'eût peut-être aimé? Demander des explications à sa mère? Jamais il n'eût osé. Il at-

tendait d'être grand pour comprendre ces mystères. Mais une chose dont il était bien sûr, c'est qu'une mère doit aimer son petit garçon.

Un jour elle le conduisit dans une grande maison, qu'elle lui dit être son théâtre. Ce mot ne représentait rien à l'esprit de l'enfant. Il l'entendait souvent répéter, mais il en ignorait le sens. Il suivit sa mère docilement, le cœur gros, car elle lui avait enjoint durement de faire tout ce qu'on lui dirait, sans s'étonner et sans demander pourquoi.

Ils entrèrent dans un couloir étroit, sales et sombre, qu'éclairaient à peine des ampoules électriques usées. Pierre avait peur. Ils montèrent ensuite des escaliers interminables et noirs, qui touraient ou zigzaguaient sans cesse. Ils arrivèrent dans une petite chambre, où des gens les attendaient. Aux murs, Pierre remarqua des gravures et des portraits qui ressemblaient à sa mère, et qui pourtant paraissaient représenter une autre personne, car jamais l'enfant ne l'avait vue avec des robes ni avec des coiffures aussi riches et aussi extraordinaires. Elle était vêtue comme les fées que la vieille voisine lui faisait admirer en images.

On le prit soudain pour lui ôter ses habits et lui en mettre d'autres, qu'il jugea singuliers, mais beaux. Il était tout fier, car la femme qui l'habillait l'avait embrassé en lui disant qu'il était joli comme un chérubin. Il ne savait pas ce que c'était; néanmois le compliment lui avait fait plaisir et il était rouge de contentement.

Mais sa mère était venue le prendre; elle aussi avait de magnifiques habits, des colliers éblouissants, un diadème. Elle le plaça dans un coin, en lui ordonnant de rester là jusqu'à ce qu'on vêut le chercher. Puis elle disparut.

Cela dura longtemps. Pierre ne savait que devenir; il entendait un bruit confus de paroles, de plaintes et de cris, qui l'effrayaient. Des allées et vènues secouaient sa torpeur, mais redoublaient son effarement et ses craintes.

Enfin, un femme, qui portait aussi un costume inusité, vint le prendre par la main et l'emmena presque sans transition devant une grande salle étincelante de lumière, de dorures et de cristaux. Il fut ébloui. Puis il vit qu'elle était pleine de beaux messieurs et de belles dames qui le regardaient, avec sympathie, à ce qu'il crut. Sa mère était là, et semblait l'attendre. Sans doute, c'était pour l'amuser qu'elle l'avait conduit dans cette belle maison?

Et voici qu'elle l'embrassait bien fort, comme elle ne l'avait jamais embrassé, et qu'elle lui disait des choses très douces, avec une voix musicale comme un chant d'oiseau. Elle lui disait qu'il était son fils chéri, sa vie et son trésor, qu'elle n'avait rien de plus précieux que lui. Et voici qu'elle lui parlait de son papa, qu'elle paraissait aimer beaucoup.

Petit Pierre était ivre de surprise et de bonheur. Il allait dire à sa mère tout son ravissement, l'embrasser encore bien fort et bien longtemps, et lui demander de le mener bien vite voir son papa.

Mais à ce moment un grand rideau tomba devant lui. On l'emmena. Il entendit un fracas bizarre qui lui fit peur de nouveau. On eût dit que la maison s'écroulait. Enfin, sa mère revint. Il se précipita vers elle, avec, sur les lèvres, des mots d'amour et de caresses; il lui tendait avidemment ses petits bras en l'appelant:

— Maman! Maman!

Mais elle le repoussa brutalement, sans voir ses yeux soudain remplis de grosses larmes, et cria en ricanant, de sa voix rude et mèchante des autres jours:

— Non! mais il croit que c'est arrivé! Ce qu'il est embêtant, ce gosse-là!

# AN INVITATION TO LUNCH

By Lawrence Vail

MY DEAR CYRIL:

I am writing to tell you that I accept your flowers with thanks, while I refuse your invitation to lunch.

I don't think I owe you any explanation. Nevertheless, for my own satisfaction, I have decided to give you one. In short, I accept your flowers because I like flowers, and I refuse your invitation because I don't like you. If you send me flowers and fruit—in fact, anything nice to eat—I have decided not to offend you by sending it back.

You see that from the start I am frank. My frankness, however, is not for your benefit, but for my own pleasure. It is a singular luxury for a woman like myself to be sincere for once in her life. At the present moment there is nothing to lose by it.

I suppose it is hard for you to believe that I do not like you. Last night, quite unexpectedly—I think both of us were surprised—I gave you what is generally known as a token of love—at least that is the kindest interpretation so far as I am concerned. Some women, I am told, cannot give more. I am sure that I could not have given you less, and I sorely regretted it. From that moment I ceased to puzzle you, and you must admit that up to last night I was a bit of a mystery. That was my strength. What angers me most is the loss of this strength.

I feel tempted at this moment to tell you something about myself.

I was born in Australia, of honest but unimaginative parents. Seven years ago I ran away from home with a good-looking young man who made the usual promises. I believed him. After three months he abandoned me. So far, you will agree, my story lacks novelty.

I have read in a book that girls in similar predicaments often do something sensational and rather absurd. Sometimes they turn on the gas and gingerly sniff at the jet; sometimes they tie hard little knots around white little throats; sometimes they stand on a bridge when it is very dark and give the glad eye to the water. It appears that now and again they are killed. Then well and good, though it seems to me peevish to take one's own life. More often, however, there is nothing more serious than a few squeaks and a splash. The rest of life is spent in sin and repentance. Personally, I have no craving for either, but the latter must be by far the more painful.

Fortunately, though I say it myself, I am not easily troubled. It was almost eleven o'clock when I discovered that my lover was faithless and the only symptom I can recollect was a temporary loss of appetite—an affliction I did not mind when I found that my funds amounted only to two shillings and twopence. During the afternoon I meditated deeply. The result of this meditation was a feeling of gratitude. I rejoiced that all my illusions had been killed by one blow. I fully understood that if I had kept them they would have hampered my life. The fact was established that all men are liars. Lately I have slightly amended it, dividing men into two classes: liars and fools.

You can imagine my life during the following years. I do not even remember whether time passed swiftly or slowly. I was never dispirited, knowing the ill effect of sorrow on beauty and health. I often looked melancholy in the company of wealthy and ingenuous youths, but with more aged men I give full vent to my natural gaiety. If

one man deceived me I deceived at least fifty men. I do not think I have any just cause for complaint.

Almost eight months ago I received my first real disappointment. One day, looking in the mirror, I discovered two little wrinkles at the corner of my mouth. On further examination I perceived that my eyes were not shining so prettily. Evidently the life disagreed with me. As usual I take little time to make up my mind: I decided to reform and be good.

I was known in Sydney as Caroline Tooks. I saw immediately that to attain my desire I must not only leave Sydney but choose a name more suitable to my new style of living. After grave deliberation I booked a passage for England under the name of Ruth Paine.

When I landed in Southampton no one who had known me formerly would have possibly recognized me. I used to dress smartly, lace tightly, rouge my lips and blacken my eyes. Now I wear no corsets, use no scent, while my blouses are cut even lower than usual, affecting a simple, ingenuous style. Everybody could see I was fresh from the country. I increased this illusion by choosing as topics of conversation the beauty of nature and the glorious charm of the bush. It is needless to say that I studiously avoided colonials.

The great trouble at first was my voice. It never was very pretty and the life I had led in Australia had contributed to make it harsh and unpleasant. My gestures, too, had an awkward tendency to be a trifle familiar.

At this stage in my career I was extremely favoured by chance. At the house I was living I made the acquaintance of the ex-butler of the Duke of ———. He bored me, but his language was admirable. He knew all the orthodox conventions. He knew exactly what a young lady of the highest distinction should do and should say at any given moment; also—which was more important—what she must *not* do and *not* say. Since he was old enough to be my grandfather I appealed to his vanity by pretending to feel as a sister towards him. It was through him that I mastered the vocabulary and inflections which puzzled and attracted you and your friends.

I also met a woman in a tea-room off Piccadilly who had the most exquisitely artificial manner and gestures. She had at one time loved a naval officer; he had died—heroically, now she loved the navy instead. From her I learnt those sentimental expressions which never fail to impress a certain category of Englishmen.

It was about that time that I discovered that Café in Prince Street which is the rendezvous of second-rate esthetes, budding socialists, and unsuccessful actresses with artistic pretensions. I was attracted by the artificiality of the place. The habitués were so easily persuaded of their individual originality that I foresaw little trouble in persuading them of my extraordinary ingenuousness. To mystify them I pretended to be mystified by them. To flatter them I pretended to be a little bit shocked. None are so easily humbugged as humbugs.

I immediately struck the right note. The other women were free, impudent, wise; I managed to appear stiff, modest, and a little bit silly. In reality, I was far more brazen than they, but I carried it off under a veil of absolute candour. When a man spoke to me I answered him shyly. I did not take possession of him, as is the custom with women, but timorously allowed him to take possession of me. I managed to blush when I drank a liqueur, I coughed after each cigarette. And I appeared to be ashamed of my coughs and ashamed of my blushes. I ever remember sniffing at a whisky and soda like a housemaid testing a suspicious egg, casting a glance around me in evident fear lest someone had seen me.

Now and again I would come out with the most extraordinary remarks in an innocent voice. I asked impossible questions, and I was indignant when everyone laughed.

You know how well I succeeded;

some thought me ingenuous, some thought that I was exceptionally wicked and brazen. But then they never felt sure. I was a mystery. I baffled them. There were many prettier girls, but one knew what to expect from them. They dared not believe me innocent, lest they might appear foolish; neither did they dare believe me depraved lest they should appear cads.

Of course I was hated by all the other women. They saw through me at once. The less prudent talked scandal about me, which only served to make men think they were jealous.

You tried to find out the other night how I got sufficient money to live. You suspected that it was given to me by men. Well, you were right. But I tell you quite frankly—you will admit that after all I have told you there is no reason to lie—that I never gave them anything in exchange.

I had quite a lot of money when I came to London, but it all went in two months. On the day that I split my last sovereign I accepted Captain Smith's invitation to supper. He drove me home in a taxi, then, though it was late, and after a show of resistance, I let him enter my flat. As I was taking off my cloak he started to kiss me. I pushed him away. As that availed nothing I started to weep. I wept for an hour—magnificently.

At first he was not at all impressed by my acting. He told me to stop my noise. Did I think him a fool? How did I think that he thought that I lived?

I admitted in a tearful voice that I had accepted money from Baron Rubinstein. But I did not think it was wrong. Was there any real harm in it? I had been in such trouble! And the Baron was so very rich! Oh, if he thought such bad things about me, I never would do it again. It would be far better to starve.

Captain Smith quieted down. He dried my tears and held my hand. I begged him not to kiss me. Would he like his sister to be kissed by strange men, however kind and respectable?

This last argument prevailed. He spent three hours pitying me. By the end I felt very sleepy. Finally he told me that he would give me an income if I promised not to accept a penny from any other man. I told him that I could not accept anything from anyone—not even from him. Men had such evil minds! It was hard for a girl to keep her name clear in this world. Then he began to apologize. He begged my forgiveness. At last, very reluctantly, I allowed myself to be persuaded.

A few days later I repeated the same scene, successfully, with the Baron himself. It is thus, by a little dishonesty, that I have managed during my stay in London to lead a respectable life.

I suppose success turned my head. I thought that all men were equally gullible. Then came the night when you came to my flat. I intended to play the same game. But I soon forgot all about it.

You see, I expected you to kiss me at once. The scene was all planned and rehearsed. I had every intonation prepared and each gesture perfected.

You appeared sleepy and a little bit tired. I suppose that annoyed me. You sat down in front of the fire, and began talking about your life, your plans, your travels, all sorts of calm, sensible things. Then gradually I became interested. I forgot to keep a hold on myself. It was nice to talk—to talk naturally—without worrying about what I was saying.

I did not notice it when you laid your head in my lap. When you took hold of my hand I was conscious of nothing save that it was nice. I had forgotten that I was Ruth Paine, that I was playing a part.

Then of a sudden—all the evening you had been talking so calmly—you gave me a look,—there was something strange in that look. A wave rose in me from somewhere—it swept through us both. I saw you as something wild, terrible, wonderful. For a moment, just for a moment, I felt what was going to happen, though I was absolutely unable to stop it. But that moment

passed. All became a vast dizzy blur. I heard a voice crying—I heard my voice crying—the voice I had not heard for nearly a year. It was not the demure voice of Ruth Paine. It was the harsh voice of Caroline Tooks.

So now you know why I don't like you. Ruth Paine does not like you. Ruth Paine will accept chocolates and flowers, in fact anything that tastes good and looks pretty. But Ruth Paine will not accept your invitation to lunch, for there might be another guest there whom she does not care to meet—a guest called Caroline Tooks.

RUTH.

# INDIVIDUALISTS

## By Amanda Benjamin Hall

BELOVED, can you understand
The fellow-riddle that is I?
The while we sit hand clasped in hand
My soul escapes me like a sigh

Above the thin blue outer air
Are mystic trails I travel far;
I pass you by with streaming hair
Gold-dusty where it brushed a star.

And when I dip, O Mighty One,
In deepest purple of a grief,
You take your turn to drink the sun
A-quiver like a leaf.

The unity of man and mate
Is not enough for such as we
Whom God created passionate,
Yet straining to be free.

We meet with sudden hearts aglow,
But fearful of the other's reach,
Just near enough at times to know
The utter loneliness of each!

**HANDSOME MEN**

NOTHING so improves personal appearance as that slight smooth tan which comes with exposure to the sun and air.

"**SUNBRONZE DE LUXE**"

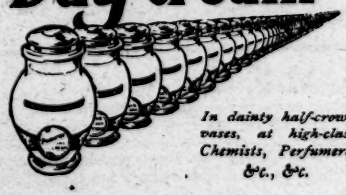
gives a perfect simulation of this tint, is **undetectable, perfectly harmless, and absolutely genuine,** to which its 5,000 testimonials received from every quarter of the globe is sufficient evidence. Unique in method and perfection of result, SUNBRONZE DE LUXE has stood the **TEST OF TIME.** Forwarded free from observation, price **10/6** (*Mark II de Luxe*, **3 guineas**). Fresh Complexion Tint for Ladies, on same principle, at same prices. Direct from

**Sunbronze Laboratories, 157, Church St., Stoke Newington, London.** (*Established* 1900.)

## The Toilet Cream de Luxe

POMEROY DAY CREAM is, of all "vanishing" creams, the most delightful. It has a lovely effect on the skin and is so fragrant and refreshing that one wants to be using it always. Being non-greasy and vanishing it can be used any time, any day. The more one uses it, the better for the skin, which is rendered soft, smooth, and fresh, and is protected against wind and weather.

**Pomeroy Day Cream**



*In dainty half-crown vases, at high-class Chemists, Perfumers, &c., &c.*

MRS. POMEROY, LTD.
29, Old Bond Street, London, W.

ESTABLISHED 1887.

Telephones: 4084, 2662 Avenue. Telegrams: "Infusory-Grace, London."

## HARDEN BROS. AND LINDSAY Limited

SPECIALISTS IN TEA AND RUBBER SHARES

23 ROOD LANE,
LONDON, E.C.

CORRESPONDENCE INVITED.

## STANLEY DRUCE

(Late of Druce and Co., Baker Street, W.)

*ANTIQUES, FURNITURE, Oriental Carpets, Rugs, etc. UPHOLSTERY & REPAIRS*

184, FINCHLEY ROAD, N.W. 3
'Phone: HAMPSTEAD 943

## H. van Slochem

OLD MASTERS AND WORKS OF ART

Collections purchased for Cash in any part of the World.

26, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
Telephone: Regent 5410. LONDON, S.W. 1.
PARIS AND NEW YORK.

# ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

## By Various Hands

Grey skies, muddy roads, wind and rain have tried their utmost to depress us, but without success—for five sober years have got to be paid for. Youth must have its fling, and girls who had the misfortune to be just emerging from the schoolroom in '14 deserve all the excitement and joy that is their birthright. The lucky ones are rushing off to Switzerland for winter sports, and are deep in the question of woollies and evening frocks.

For the daytime a very short tweed skirt with knickerbockers to match, puttees, and strong boots are necessities. Over this a woollen jumper, scarf, and pull-on cap should be worn, the brighter in shade the better. A tomato-coloured skirt, jumper, scarf, and cap is particularly effective against the snow. White is a mistake, as even when it is at its freshest and best it is apt to look grubby against the dazzling whiteness all around. The best cap to wear is the pull-on "tammy" with a small brim made in crochet, and wired. It has all the advantages of a cap that does not require dangerous hatpins, will not blow away, and yet gives a little shade to the eyes—a very big consideration over there. A large blanket or tweed coat is also a necessity, and will be found very useful when driving back from that far-distant frozen pond or toboggan-run which has necessitated a whole day's outing.

Then there is the little afternoon frock to be thought of. This may not be needed, but it is as well to cater for the days when a blizzard is raging out-of-doors, and a *thé dansant* takes the place of the ski-ing and lugging. The chemise-frocks still reign supreme, in spite of all the efforts of the dress-makers to supersede them, and chiefly because there is nothing that lends itself so well to the graceful movements required by the modern dancing. A blouse and skirt, however beautifully cut, look positively dowdy on a girl engaged in the Fox-Trot or the Boston. The latest blouse, by the way, is not a blouse at all, but a very short, straight jumper, reaching only to the hips, made in ninon silk tricot, or any dainty material, and heavily trimmed with beads. The beads make an "all-over" pattern in most cases, and are certainly the *dernier cri*.

None of the modern fashions are really new; some have even been resurrected from only four or five years ago, the vogue for bead embroidery being one of these.

These little jumpers are likely to be very popular, as nothing looks nicer under a coat, and they are exactly right for afternoon bridge. They have short sleeves, of course.

Dance-frocks for the evening require much thought, for they are destined to be in very constant use this winter. Quite the prettiest are still made in net, and are not so perishable as one would believe. I have just seen a very charming one with a flower-like skirt made of many pointed "petals," mounted over chiffon in nasturtium shade of gossamer net. The bodice was a very filmy affair with very little to describe. A touch of solidarity was given at the waist by a wide taffetas ribbon in the same shade. A bunch of nasturtiums was tucked into the loose sash, and little stray blossoms of the same wandered on to the skirt and got lost in its folds.

We are an unreasonable sex, there is no doubt about that, for the latest afternoon frock buttons right up to the neck. Indeed, some women who pride themselves in always being in the forefront of fashion have their chins almost disappearing into their collars, after the mode of their great-grandfathers; then at night they appear with absolutely no back to their frocks at all, and only a filmy wisp of tulle holding up the little strip of material across the front.

---

One of Mrs. Adair's cleverest inventions is the Ganesh Chin Strap for eradicating double chins, restoring lost contours, and curing snoring; and an equally clever one is the Ganesh Forehead Strap, which will cure the deepest lines and keep the forehead smooth and unfurrowed. These are only a few of the preparations, and a visit to Mrs. Adair at 92, New Bond Street, will be time well spent.

# THE METHODS OF A MODEL.

THE model seated herself on the dais. She was not a young woman, but there was a strange beauty in her pale face with its clouds of dark brown hair. I went over and arranged her draperies. "Do you mind if I take your hair down?" I asked, "I want to do it up in a particular way." She nodded, and I pulled out the pins. I was astonished at the flood of soft hair they released.

"What wonderful hair!" I exclaimed. "You must let me paint you some day with your hair down. . ." .I buried my hands in the thick silky masses of it. "I know some girls who would give a small fortune to have hair like that."

She only smiled, rather sadly. I knew there had been much trouble in her life. As I painted, I encouraged her to talk; at last my own curiosity overcame me, and I asked what she did to make her hair so glorious.

"Mine is always coming out," I told her. "I suppose I should have it cropped, as most women artists do."

"I've never been in a hairdresser's shop in my life," she said. "I've only used one or two old-fashioned recipes which I make up myself. I always shampoo with stallax. I find you only need about a teaspoonful to cleanse one's hair thoroughly, and so it does not work out at all expensive in the end. Once I tried something else, but my hair did not dry all soft and bright as it does after stallax, so I returned to the old recipe. If it shows any tendency to fall out, I obtain some boranium from the chemist, and mix it with a little bay rum, that soon makes it grow thick and strong again. Perhaps you wonder why, at my age—I'm fifty, you know—I haven't got grey hair? Once it did begin to look faded and streaky, but someone told me that the only real way to restore the colour was by dissolving some pure tammalite in bay rum, and applying this lotion to the hair each day. It's wonderful stuff, but people so seldom think of using anything so simple, do they?"

"They don't indeed," I answered, "but you've opened my eyes. You must write it all down, if you will be so kind. And now shall we rest? You must be tired."

As I painted, everything feminine in me wanted to ask her if she had any secrets for keeping that wonderful skin, but politeness forbade. To my joy, however, she resumed our former conversation.

"It always seems to me that old-fashioned remedies are the best. Of course, I have to consider the question of keeping such looks as I may have, because being a model is precarious work, and the market is over-stocked with old models of the wrinkled, white-haired type. I always treat my skin rather carefully, because I look on it as business capital! Every night I massage it with ordinary mercolised wax, which I wash off in the morning with warm water. That clears the skin thoroughly, because the oxygen in the wax absorbs all the waste outer tissue of the skin, and exposes the new complexion underneath, which is quite fresh and smooth. Of course, this treatment is a great preventive of wrinkles, for they never have time to form. Wrinkles only form in the old outer skin which gets coarse and flabby if it is not removed. Another thing which I use frequently is stymol. When I was young, I sometimes used to suffer from blackheads; my mother would then make me bathe them with warm water in which a tablet of stymol had been stirred. Then I found the blackheads came out, without any forcing, on a towel, and my skin was left perfectly clear and not in the least sore. I never have the horrid things now, though, because I make a point of using stymol at least once a week. You don't know how wonderfully refreshing that sparkling face-bath is to the skin. It gently closes the pores and that prevents the blackheads from forming. They are only caused by the accumulation of waste matter in pores that have become over-enlarged. Nearly everyone, in my opinion, would find the texture of their skins greatly improved if they would occasionally use some slight astringent, such as stymol."

"I think that is very true," I said. "I should like to know whether you think that powder is good for the skin." "Oh, no, I don't think so at all; it coarsens the skin, and also brings about the enlarged pores which are so ugly. But I do think that the complexion needs some sort of 'finish' to keep away the ugly shiny look, and to protect the skin from the weather. Personally I always apply a little cleminite in the morning and afternoon, and rub it gently into the skin until it dries. I find that keeps the skin cool and velvety for several hours, and is absolutely harmless."

"I have taken to using something for my lips lately, as they used to be so dry and sore. I bought an ordinary stick of prolactum, and I do not think you could find anything better. It is so soothing, and it gives one's lips just a nice warm healthy look, without any hint of make-up."

"I am very much interested in all you have told me," I answered, "I wish I could tell you some things, too. But I don't believe there is any little secret you don't know!"

"I have not yet found anything really good for the hands," she told me, holding out a pair of shapely, but roughened ones; "housework makes them so red and dirty!"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "then I can give you one tip. Get some bicrolium jelly from your chemist; you'll find that it will get all the ingrained dirt right out of your hands, besides making them beautifully soft and white. I don't know where I should be without it, myself!"

She thanked me very sincerely, and, the time being up, prepared to go.

After she had left, I fell to wondering how many women of her age, living in such poverty and hardship, kept their looks to such an extent. I looked at my painting with discontent. I could never put on canvas the texture of her lovely skin or the richness of her hair.

# MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

## IN THE MATTER OF BENZOL

I am prejudiced against benzol as a motor fuel, because my experience of its use has been the reverse of fortunate. It may be that I have been unlucky enough to have purchased benzol which was not up to sample, and that it has put me against the whole idea of the coal spirit as it is marketed now; but that is not the question. I must say, however, that the report of the A.A. on the recent 10,000 miles' test of this fuel, carried out under the supervision of the technical staff of the Association, together with a close personal inspection of the dismantled engine of the car employed, has gone a long way to convert me from my dislike of benzol.

The worst charge brought against this fuel is that it has a deleterious effect on any metals with which it comes in contact. That charge does not lie, for after 10,000 miles of running—quite two years' average mileage of the ordinary private car—there was not the slightest trace of corrosion or pitting, such as one might expect if the allegation were true. Cylinders, pistons, and valves were in excellent condition, and good for an indefinite amount of running. Nor was there much in the way of carbon deposit. Indeed, I should say there was less than if the fuel employed had been a good grade of petrol. The mileage run per gallon was much better than would have been the case with petrol, while oil consumption was certainly well on the low side. Altogether, the result of the trial is by way of being a triumph for the advocates of benzol, and I personally intend to overcome my prejudices, and to see if I cannot get better results from this fuel than I have succeeded in securing hitherto. There is this to be said, that the motorist who essays the use of benzol should be extremely careful to see that he uses nothing but the standard quality as scheduled by the National Benzol Association. Most of my own trouble came about during last summer through the use of benzol purchased in a South Coast town which, I should say, came from the local gas-works. It was vile stuff, which made the engine so foul that I had to stop on an average every fifteen miles to change sparking-plugs. Since then I have not tried benzol at all, but I am going to now.

## CAR PRICES

A lot of people are going about saying that the prices of cars will come down with a run presently, and that those who are wise will refrain from buying until that happens. My advice, for what it may be worth, is to take no notice of the *quidnuncs*, and to buy at present prices if reasonable deliveries can be obtained. Of course, the latter is the great trouble. Not only has the task of reorganizing the factories proved a more lengthy affair than was anticipated a year ago, but 1919 brought so much of industrial trouble that delay in getting back to peace-time production was much worse than anyone could have foreseen. Take the moulders' strike as a case in point. At the time of writing this has been going on for sixteen weeks and is not settled yet. Stocks of castings have long since been exhausted, and motor factories are on short time as a consequence. Therefore, we are getting no cars. Efforts have been made to cover a part of the shortage with supplies from Belgium, but machine hands in the factories have declared a sympathetic strike against their use—they will not machine them. Castings have been imported with all the machining finished—and the fitters will not assemble them. Labour has got the manufacturer in a cleft-stick, and the latter must therefore wait until it pleases the moulders to get back to work. When they do it will take at least six months before arrears are overtaken, and we shall be lucky if it is no more. What hope is there, then, of getting cars in quantities this side of September? Not an atom that I can see! And until supply overtakes demand, it is perfectly obvious that prices will not fall. As a matter of fact, I look to a further considerable increase all round before Easter.

# READ
# The
# New Europe

If you want
a frank, *inside* account
of foreign affairs
in all countries.

If you want
sane and thoughtful
criticism of all modern
currents in Literature,
Art, Music,

# READ
# The
# New Europe

**EVERY THURSDAY, PRICE 6d.**
Post free 28s. a year.

**EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE LTD.,**
**9 East Harding Street, E.C. 4.**

# SHERRY'S
**MIDDLE STREET, BRIGHTON**

**The World's Finest Ballroom**

*DANCING*

:: :: Daily at 3 and 8. :: ::

*AMERICAN COCKTAIL AND OYSTER BAR.*

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

**Advts. in this column 1s. 6d. per line.**
**Minimum, 6s.**

### DRESS

SMART GOWNS, Costumes, Furs, etc., at quarter original cost.—The Central Dress Agency, 14, Upper Baker Street (next to Bakerloo Tube).

### PERSONAL SERVICE

WRIGHT'S DETECTIVES. For Private Inquiries and Secret Watchings this Agency stands facile princeps for ability; vide Press; consultations free. T.N., London Wall 4,977. Edgar Wright, Manager, 63 MOORGATE ST. (near Bank of England). West End Branch 145, Oxford St., W. (T.N., Regent 4,830.)

### SCIENCE

SIGNORINA BASTINI gives the original answers of Planchette to questions asked by earnest inquirers. A test question, 1/6. Apply by letter only, NORTH HOUSE, BISPHAM, LANCASHIRE.

### LITERARY

**> £5 £3 £1 <**

PRIZES, FREE, awarded monthly for the best Short Story, Article, and Poem sent in. Awards published in *The Times*. Novels and Serials placed at highest prices with over 200 Publishers and Editors. Films also placed. Particulars for stamp.—CAMBRIDGE LITERARY AGENCY, 8, Henrietta Street, W.C. 2.

### WANTED.

COPY of "THE SMART SET" Magazine for July, 1912. 5/- offered for complete copy. Address—"R.," c/o "THE SMART SET" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

### EXTRA POCKET MONEY.

SEND your disused Gold and Silver Jewellery, Old Silver Plate, Pearls, Diamonds, Emeralds, Platinum, and any article whatever in Gold or Silver (Large or Small) to the well-known and old-established firm, FOLKARD & SON (Established 1814), 355 Oxford Street, near Bond Street, and we will send you cash by return.